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# STORIES OF THE SPANISH MAIN BY JOHN R. B. THOMPSON





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STORIES OF THE SPANISH MAIN



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TORONTO





PIRATES BOARDING A MAN-OF-WAR.

# STORIES OF THE SPANISH MAIN

ADAPTED FROM  
FRANK R. STOCKTON'S "BUCCANEERS  
AND PIRATES OF OUR COAST"

ILLUSTRATIONS BY  
GEORGE VARIAN AND B. WEST CLINEDINST



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# STORIES OF THE SPANISH MAIN

# Haunts of

## "The Brethren of the Coast"

SCALE OF MILES

150	250	350
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# STORIES OF THE SPANISH MAIN

## CHAPTER I

### PUPILS IN PIRACY

**A**FTER the discoveries of Columbus, the Spanish mind seems to have been filled with the idea that the whole undiscovered world, wherever it might be, belonged to Spain, and that no other nation had any right whatever to discover anything on the other side of the Atlantic, or to make any use whatever of lands that had been discovered. In fact, the natives of the new countries, and the inhabitants of all old countries except her own, were considered by Spain as possessing no rights whatever. If the natives refused to pay tribute, or to spend their days toiling for gold for their masters, or if vessels from England or France touched at one of their settlements for purposes of trade, it was all the same to the Spaniards; a war of attempted extermination was waged alike

against the peaceful inhabitants of Hispaniola, now Hayti,<sup>1</sup> and upon the bearded and hardy seamen from Northern Europe. Under this treatment the natives weakened and gradually disappeared; but the buccaneers became more and more numerous and powerful.

The buccaneers were not unlike that class of men known in our western country as cowboys. Young fellows of good families from England and France often determined to embrace a life of adventure, and possibly profit, and sailed out to the West Indies to get gold and hides, and to fight Spaniards. Frequently they dropped their family names and assumed others more suitable to roving freebooters, and, like the bold young fellows who ride over our western plains, driving cattle and shooting Indians, they adopted a style of dress free and easy, but probably not quite as picturesque, as that of the cowboy. They soon became a very rough set of fellows, in appearance as well as action, endeavoring in every way to let the people of the western world understand that they were absolutely free and independent of the manners

<sup>1</sup> See map.

and customs, as well as of the laws, of their native countries.

So well was this independence understood, that when the buccaneers became strong enough to inflict some serious injury upon the settlements in the West Indies, and the Spanish court remonstrated with Queen Elizabeth on account of what had been done by some of her subjects, she replied that she had nothing to do with these buccaneers, who, although they had been born in England, had ceased for the time to be her subjects, and the Spaniards must defend themselves against them just as if they were an independent nation.

But it is impossible for men who have been brought up in civilized society, and who have been accustomed to obey laws, to rid themselves entirely of all ideas of propriety and morality, as soon as they begin a life of lawlessness. So it happened that many of the buccaneers could not divest themselves of the notions of good behavior to which they had been accustomed from youth. For instance, we are told of a captain of buccaneers, who, landing at a settlement on a Sunday, took his crew to church. As it is not at all proba-

ble that any of the buccaneering vessels carried chaplains, opportunities of attending services must have been rare. This captain seems to have wished to show that pirates in church know what they ought to do just as well as other people; it was for this reason that, when one of his men behaved himself in an improper and disorderly manner during the service, this proper-minded captain arose from his seat and shot the offender dead.

There was a Frenchman of that period who must have been a warm-hearted philanthropist, because, having read accounts of the terrible atrocities of the Spaniards in the western lands, he determined to leave his home and his family, and become a buccaneer, in order that he might do what he could for the suffering natives in the Spanish possessions. He entered into the great work which he had planned for himself with such enthusiasm and zeal, that in the course of time he came to be known as "The Exterminator," and if there had been more people of his philanthropic turn of mind, there would soon have been no inhabitants whatever upon the islands from which the Spaniards had driven out the Indians.

There was another person of that day, — also a Frenchman, — who became deeply involved in debt in his own country, and, feeling that the principles of honor forbade him to live upon and enjoy what was really the property of others, he made up his mind to sail across the Atlantic, and become a buccaneer. He hoped that if he should be successful in his new profession, and should be enabled to rob Spaniards for a term of years, he could return to France, pay off all his debts, and afterward live the life of a man of honor and respectability.

Other ideas which the buccaneers brought with them from their native countries soon showed themselves when these daring sailors began their lives as regular pirates; among these, the idea of organization was very prominent. Of course it was hard to get a number of free and untrammelled<sup>1</sup> crews to unite and obey the commands of a few officers. But in time the buccaneers had recognized leaders, and laws were made for concerted action. In consequence of this the buccaneers became a formidable body of men, some-

<sup>1</sup> Untrammelled, uncontrolled.



times superior to the Spanish naval and military forces.

It must be remembered that the buccaneers lived in a very peculiar age. So far as the history of America is concerned, it might be called the age of blood and gold. In the newly discovered countries there were no laws which European nations or individuals cared to observe. In the West Indies and the adjacent mainlands there were gold and silver, and there were also valuable products of other kinds, and when the Spaniards sailed to their part of the new world, these treasures were the things for which they came. The natives were weak and not able to defend themselves. All the Spaniards had to do was to take what they could find, and when they could not find enough they made the poor Indians find it for them. Here was a part of the world, and an age of the world, wherein it was the custom for men to do what they pleased, provided they felt themselves strong enough, and it was not to be supposed that any one European nation could expect a monopoly<sup>1</sup> of this state of mind.

<sup>1</sup> Monopoly, sole ownership.



Therefore it was that while the Spaniards robbed and ruined the natives of the lands which they discovered, the English, French, and Dutch buccaneers robbed the robbers. Great vessels were sent out from Spain, carrying nothing in the way of merchandise to America, but returning with all the precious metals and valuable products of the newly discovered regions, which could in any way be taken from the unfortunate natives. The gold mines of the new world had long been worked, and yielded handsome revenues, but the native method of operating them did not satisfy the Spaniards, who forced the poor Indians to labor incessantly at the difficult task of digging out the precious metals, until many of them died under the cruel oppression. Sometimes the Indians were kept six months under ground, working in the mines; and at one time, when it was found that the natives had died off, or had fled from the neighborhood of some of the rich gold deposits, it was proposed to send to Africa and get a cargo of negroes to work the mines.

Now it is easy to see that all this made buccaneering a very tempting occupation. To cap-

ture a great treasure ship, after the Spaniards had been at so much trouble to load it, was a grand thing, according to the pirate's point of view, and although it often required reckless bravery and almost superhuman energy to accomplish the feats necessary in this dangerous vocation, these were qualities which were possessed by nearly all the sea-robbers of our coast; the stories of some of the most interesting of these wild and desperate fellows — men who did not combine piracy with discoveries and explorations, but who were out-and-out sea-robbers, and gained in that way all the reputation they ever possessed — will be told in subsequent chapters.

## CHAPTER II

### PETER THE GREAT

VERY prominent among the early regular buccaneers was a Frenchman who came to be called Peter the Great. This man seems to have been one of those adventurers who were not buccaneers in the earlier sense of the word (by which I mean they were not traders who touched at Spanish settlements to procure cattle and hides, and who were prepared to fight any Spaniards who might interfere with them), but they were men who came from Europe on purpose to prey upon Spanish possessions, whether on land or sea. Some of them made a rough sort of settlement on the island of Tortuga, and then it was that Peter the Great seems to have come into prominence. He gathered about him a body of adherents,<sup>1</sup> but although he had a great reputation as an individual pirate, it seems to have

<sup>1</sup> Adherents, followers.

been a good while before he achieved any success as a leader.

The fortunes of Peter and his men must have been at a pretty low ebb when they found themselves cruising in a large, canoe-shaped boat not far from the island of Hispaniola.<sup>1</sup> There were twenty-nine of them in all, and they were not able to procure a vessel suitable for their purpose. They had been a long time floating about in an aimless way, hoping to see some Spanish merchant-vessel which they might attack and possibly capture, but no such vessel appeared. Their provisions began to give out, the men were hungry, discontented, and grumbling. In fact, they were in almost as bad a condition as were the sailors of Columbus just before they discovered signs of land, after their long and weary voyage across the Atlantic.

When Peter and his men were almost on the point of despair, they perceived, far away upon the still waters, a large ship. With a great jump, hope sprang up in the breast of every man. They seized the oars and pulled in the direction of the

<sup>1</sup> See map.

distant craft. But when they were near enough, they saw that the vessel was not a merchantman, probably piled with gold and treasure, but a man-of-war belonging to the Spanish fleet. In fact, it was the vessel of the vice-admiral. This was an astonishing and disheartening state of things. It was very much as if a lion, hearing the approach of probable prey, had sprung from the thicket where he had been concealed, and had beheld before him, not a fine, fat deer, but an immense and scrawny elephant.

But the twenty-nine buccaneers in the crew were very hungry. They had not come out upon those waters to attack men-of-war, but, more than that, they had not come out to perish by hunger and thirst. There could be no doubt that there was plenty to eat and to drink on that tall Spanish vessel, and if they could not get food and water they could not live more than a day or two longer.

Under the circumstances it was not long before Peter the Great made up his mind that if his men would stand by him, he would endeavor to capture that Spanish war-vessel; when he put the question to his crew they all swore that they would

follow him and obey his orders as long as life was left in their bodies. To attack a vessel armed with cannon, and manned by a crew very much larger than their little party, seemed almost like throwing themselves upon certain death. But still, there was a chance that in some way they might get the better of the Spaniards; whereas, if they rowed away again into the solitudes of the ocean, they would give up all chance of saving themselves from death by starvation. Steadily, therefore, they pulled toward the Spanish vessel, and slowly — for there was but little wind — she approached them.

The people in the man-of-war did not fail to perceive the little boat far out on the ocean, and some of them sent to the captain and reported the fact. The news, however, did not interest him, for he was engaged in playing cards in his cabin, and it was not until an hour afterward that he consented to come on deck and look out toward the boat which had been sighted, and which was now much nearer.

Taking a good look at the boat, and perceiving that it was nothing more than a canoe, the captain laughed at the advice of some of his officers, who

thought it would be well to fire a few cannon-shot and sink the little craft. The captain thought it would be a useless proceeding. He did not know anything about the people in the boat, and he did not very much care, but he remarked that if they should come near enough, it might be a good thing to put out some tackle and haul them and their boat on deck, after which they might be examined and questioned whenever it should suit his convenience. Then he went down to his cards.

If Peter the Great and his men could have been sure that by rowing alongside the Spanish vessel they would be quietly hauled on deck and examined, they would have been delighted at the opportunity. With cutlasses,<sup>1</sup> pistols, and knives, they were more than ready to demonstrate to the Spaniards what sort of fellows they were, and the captain would have found hungry pirates uncomfortable persons to question.

But it seemed to Peter and his crew a very difficult thing indeed to get themselves on board the man-of-war, so they curbed their ardor and enthusiasm, and waited until nightfall before approach-

<sup>1</sup> Cutlasses, short, heavy, curved swords.



ing nearer. As soon as it became dark enough they slowly and quietly paddled toward the great ship, which was now almost becalmed. There were no lights in the boat, and the people on the deck of the vessel saw and heard nothing on the dark waters around them.

When they were very near the man-of-war, the captain of the buccaneers — according to the ancient accounts of this adventure — ordered his surgeon to bore a large hole in the bottom of their canoe. It is probable that this officer, with his saws and other surgical instruments, was expected to do carpenter work when there were no duties for him to perform in the regular line of his profession. At any rate, he went to work, and noiselessly bored the hole.

This remarkable proceeding showed the desperate character of these pirates. A great, almost impossible task was before them, and nothing but absolute recklessness could enable them to succeed. If his men should meet with strong opposition from the Spaniards in the proposed attack, and if any of them should become frightened and try to retreat to the boat, Peter knew that all would



be lost, and consequently he determined to make it impossible for any man to get away in that boat. If they could not conquer the Spanish vessel they must die on her decks.

When the half-sunken canoe touched the sides of the vessel, the pirates, seizing every rope or projection on which they could lay their hands, climbed up the sides of the man-of-war, as if they had been twenty-nine cats, and, springing over the rail, dashed upon the sailors who were on deck. These men were utterly stupefied and astounded. They had seen nothing, they had heard nothing, and all of a sudden they were confronted by savage fellows with cutlasses and pistols.

Some of the crew looked over the sides to see where these strange visitors had come from, but they saw nothing, for the canoe had gone to the bottom. Then they were filled with a superstitious horror, believing that the wild visitors were devils who had dropped from the sky, for there seemed no other place from which they could come. Making no attempt to defend themselves, the sailors, wild with terror, tumbled below and hid themselves, without even giving an alarm.

The Spanish captain was still playing cards, and whether he was winning or losing, the old historians do not tell us, but suddenly a newcomer took a hand in the game. This was Peter the Great, and he played the ace of trumps. With a great pistol in his hand, he called upon the Spanish captain to surrender. That noble commander glanced around. There was a savage pirate holding a pistol at the head of each of the officers at the table. He threw up his cards. The trick was won by Peter and his men.

The rest of the game was easy enough. When the pirates spread themselves over the vessel, the frightened crew got out of sight as well as they could. Some, who attempted to seize their arms in order to defend themselves, were ruthlessly cut down or shot, and when the hatches had been securely fastened upon the sailors who had fled below, Peter the Great was captain and owner of that tall Spanish man-of-war.

It is quite certain that the first thing these pirates did to celebrate their victory was to eat a rousing good supper, and then they took charge of the vessel, and sailed her triumphantly over the

waters on which, not many hours before, they had feared that a little boat would soon be floating, filled with their emaciated<sup>1</sup> bodies.

This most remarkable success of Peter the Great worked a great change, of course, in the circumstances of himself and his men. But it worked a greater change in the career, and possibly in the character, of the captain. He was now a very rich man, and all his followers had plenty of money. The Spanish vessel was amply supplied with provisions, and there was also on board a great quantity of gold bullion,<sup>2</sup> which was to be shipped to Spain. In fact, Peter and his men had booty enough to satisfy any sensible pirate. Now we all know that sensible pirates, and people in any sphere of life who are satisfied when they have enough, are very rare indeed, and therefore it is not a little surprising that the bold buccaneer, whose story we are now telling, should have proved that he merited, in a certain way, the title his companions had given him.

Sailing his prize to the shores of Hispaniola,

<sup>1</sup> Emaciated, very lean, wasted away.

<sup>2</sup> Bullion, gold or silver in bars, not coined.

Peter put on shore all the Spaniards whose services he did not desire. The rest of his prisoners he compelled to help his men work the ship, and then, without delay, he sailed away to France, and there he retired entirely from the business of piracy, and became a gentleman of wealth and leisure.

## CHAPTER III

### THE STORY OF A PEARL PIRATE

THE ordinary story of the pirate, or the wicked man in general, no matter how successful he may have been in his criminal career, nearly always ends disastrously, and in that way points a moral which doubtless has a good effect on a large class of people, who would be very glad to do wrong, provided no harm was likely to come to them in consequence. But the story of Peter the Great, which we have just told, contains no such moral. In fact, its influence upon the adventurers of that period was most unwholesome.

When the wonderful success of Peter the Great became known, the buccaneering community at Tortuga<sup>1</sup> was wildly excited. Every bushy-bearded fellow who could get possession of a small boat, and induce a score of other bushy-bearded fellows to follow him, wanted to start out and

<sup>1</sup> See map.

capture a rich Spanish galleon, as the great ships, used alike for war and commerce, were then called.

But not only were the French and English sailors and traders who had become buccaneers excited and stimulated by the remarkable good fortune of their companion, but many people of adventurous mind, who had never thought of leaving England for purposes of piracy, now became firmly convinced that there was no business which promised better than that of a buccaneer, and some of them crossed the ocean for the express purpose of getting rich by capturing Spanish vessels homeward bound.

As there were not enough suitable vessels in Tortuga for the demands of the recently stimulated <sup>1</sup> industry, the buccaneer settlers went to other parts of the West Indies to obtain suitable craft, and it is related that in about a month after the great victory of Peter the Great, two large Spanish vessels, loaded with silver bullion, and two other heavily laden merchantmen were brought into Tortuga by the buccaneers.

One of the adventurers who set out about this

<sup>1</sup> Stimulated, roused to new activity.

time on a cruise after gold-laden vessels, was a Frenchman who was known to his countrymen as Pierre François, and to the English as Peter Francis. He was a good sailor, and ready for any sort of a sea-fight, but for a long time he cruised about without seeing anything which it was worth while to attempt to capture. At last, when his provisions began to give out, and his men became somewhat discontented, Pierre made up his mind that, rather than return to Tortuga empty-handed, he would make a bold and novel stroke for fortune.

At the mouth of one of the large rivers of the mainland the Spaniards had established a pearl fishery, — for there was no kind of wealth or treasure, on the land, under ground, or at the bottom of the sea, that the Spaniards did not get if it were possible for them to do so.

Every year, at the proper season, a dozen or more vessels came to this pearl-bank, attended by a man-of-war to protect them from molestation. Pierre knew all about this, and as he could not find any Spanish merchantmen to rob, he thought he would go down and see what he could do with the pearl-fishers. This was something the buc-



caneers had not yet attempted, but no one knows what he can do until he tries, and it was very necessary that this buccaneer captain should try something immediately.

When he reached the coast near the mouth of the river, he took the masts out of his little vessel, and rowed quietly toward the pearl-fishing fleet, as if he had intended to join them on some entirely peaceable errand; and, in fact, there was no reason whatever why the Spaniards should suppose that a boat full of buccaneers should be rowing along that part of the coast.

The pearl-fishing vessels were all at anchor, and the people on board were quietly attending to their business. Out at sea, some distance from the mouth of the river, the man-of-war was lying becalmed. The native divers who went down to the bottom of the sea to bring up the shellfish that contained the pearls, plunged into the water, and came up wet and shining in the sun, with no fear whatever of any sharks which might be swimming about in search of a dinner, and the people on the vessels opened the oysters and carefully searched for pearls, feeling as safe from harm as



if they were picking olives in their native groves.

But something worse than a shark was quietly making its way over those tranquil waters, and no banditti who ever descended from Spanish mountains upon the quiet peasants of a village, equalled in ferocity the savage fellows who were crouching in the little boat belonging to Pierre of Tortuga.

This innocent-looking craft, which the pearl-fishers probably thought was loaded with fruit or vegetables which somebody from the mainland desired to sell, was permitted, without being challenged or interfered with, to row up alongside the largest vessel of the fleet, on which there were some armed men and a few cannon.

As soon as Pierre's boat touched the Spanish vessel, the buccaneers sprang on board with their pistols and cutlasses, and a savage fight began. The Spaniards were surprised, but there were a great many more of them than there were pirates, and they fought hard. However, the man who makes the attack, and who is at the same time desperate and hungry, has a great advantage, and it was not long before the buccaneers were masters

of the vessel. Those of the Spaniards who were not killed were forced into the service of their captors, and Pierre found himself in command of a very good vessel.

Now it so happened that the man-of-war was so far away that she knew nothing of this fight on board one of the fleet which she was there to watch, and if she had known of it, she would not have been able to give any assistance, for there was no wind by which she could sail to the mouth of the river. Therefore, so far as she was concerned, Pierre considered himself safe.

But although he had captured a Spanish ship, he was not so foolish as to haul down her flag, and run up his own in her place. He had had very good success so far, but he was not satisfied. It was quite probable that there was a rich store of pearls on board the vessel he had taken, but on the other vessels of the fleet there were many more pearls, and these he wanted if he could get them. In fact, he conceived the grand idea of capturing the whole fleet.

But it would be impossible for Pierre to attempt anything on such a magnificent scale until he had

first disposed of the man-of-war, and as he had now a good strong ship, with a much larger crew than that with which he had set out, — for the Spanish prisoners would be obliged to man the guns and help in every way to fight their countrymen, — Pierre determined to attack the man-of-war.

A land wind began to blow, which enabled him to make very fair headway out to sea. The Spanish colors were flying from his topmast, and he hoped to be able, without being suspected of any evil designs, to get so near to the man-of-war that he might run alongside and boldly board her.

But something now happened which Pierre could not have expected. When the commander of the war-vessel perceived that one of the fleet under his charge was leaving her companions and putting out to sea, he could imagine no reason for such extraordinary conduct, except that she was taking advantage of the fact that the wind had not yet reached his vessel, and was trying to run away with the pearls she had on board. From these ready suspicions we may imagine that, at that time, the robbers who robbed robbers were not all buccaneers.

Soon after the Spanish captain perceived that one of his fleet was making his way out of the river, the wind reached his vessel, and he immediately set all sail and started in pursuit of the rascals, whom he supposed to be his dishonest countrymen.

The breeze freshened rapidly, and when Pierre and his men saw that the man-of-war was coming toward them at a good rate of speed, showing plainly that she had suspicions of them, they gave up all hope of running alongside of her and boarding her, and concluded that the best thing they could do would be to give up their plan of capturing the pearl-fishing fleet, and get away with the ship they had taken, and whatever it had on board. So they set all sail, and there was a fine sea-chase.

The now frightened buccaneers were too anxious to get away. They not only put on all the sail that the vessel could carry, but they put on more. The wind blew harder, and suddenly down came the mainmast with a crash. This stopped the chase, and the next act in the performance would have to be a sea-fight. Pierre and his buccaneers were good at that sort of thing, and when the man-of-war came up, there was a terrible time on board



"THEY SET SAIL AND THERE WAS A FINE SEA-CHASE."

those two vessels. But the Spaniards were the stronger, and the buccaneers were defeated.

There must have been something in the daring courage of this Frenchman and his little band of followers which gave him favor in the eyes of the Spanish captain, for there was no other reason for the good treatment which the buccaneers received.

They were not put to the sword nor thrown overboard, nor sent on shore and made to work as slaves, — three very common methods of treating prisoners in those days. But they were all set free, and put on land, where they might go where they pleased.

This unfortunate result of the bold enterprise undertaken by Pierre François was deeply deplored<sup>1</sup> not only at Tortuga, but in England and in France. If this bold buccaneer had captured the pearl fleet, it would have been a victory that would have made a hero of him on each side of the Atlantic, but had he even been able to get away with the one vessel he had seized, he would have been a rich man, and might have retired to a life of ease and affluence; the vessel he had captured

<sup>1</sup> Deplored, regretted, regarded with sorrow.



proved to be one of the richest laden of the whole fleet, and not only in the hearts of Pierre and his men, but among his sympathizers in Europe and America, there was great disappointment at the loss of that mainmast, which, until it cracked, was carrying him forward to fame and fortune.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SURPRISING ADVENTURES OF BARTHOLEMY PORTUGUEZ

**A**S we have seen that the buccaneers were mainly English, French, and Dutch sailors, who were united to make a common piratical warfare upon the Spaniards in the West Indies, it may seem a little strange to find a man from Portugal who seemed to be on the wrong side of this peculiar fight which was going on in the new world between the sailors of Northern and Southern Europe. But although Portugal is such a close neighbor of Spain, the two countries have often been at war with each other, and their interests are by no means the same. The only advantage that Portugal could expect from the newly discovered treasures of the West were those which her seafaring men, acting with the seafaring men of other nations, should wrest<sup>1</sup> from Spanish vessels homeward bound.

<sup>1</sup> Wrest, take by force.



Consequently, there were Portuguese among the pirates of those days. Among these was a man named Bartholemy Portuguese, a famous *flibustier*. It may be here remarked that the name of buccaneer was chiefly affected by the English adventurers on our coast, while the French members of the profession often preferred the name of "flibustier."<sup>1</sup> This word, which has since been corrupted into our familiar "filibuster," is said to have been originally a corruption, being nothing more than the French method of pronouncing the word "freebooters," which title had long been used for independent robbers.

Thus, although Bartholemy called himself a flibustier, he was really a buccaneer, and his name came to be known all over the Caribbean Sea.<sup>2</sup> From the accounts we have of him it appears that he did not start out on his career of piracy as a poor man. He had some capital to invest in the business, and when he went over to the West Indies he took with him a small ship, armed with four small cannon, and manned by a crew of picked men, many of them no doubt professional robbers, and

<sup>1</sup> Flibustier (pronounced flē'bus-tyā').

<sup>2</sup> See map.

the others anxious for practice in this most alluring vocation, for the gold fields of California were never more attractive to the bold and hardy adventurers of our country, than were the gold fields of the sea to the buccaneers and filibustiers of the seventeenth century.

When Bartholemy reached the Caribbean Sea he probably first touched at Tortuga, the pirates' headquarters, and then sailed out very much as if he had been a fisherman going forth to see what he could catch on the sea. He cruised about on the track generally taken by treasure ships going from the mainland to the Havanas, or to the island of Hispaniola, and when at last he sighted a vessel in the distance, it was not long before he and his men had made up their minds that if they were to have any sport that day it would be with what might be called most decidedly a game fish, for the ship slowly sailing toward them was a large Spanish vessel, and from her portholes there protruded the muzzles of at least twenty cannon. Of course, they knew that such a vessel would have a much larger crew than their own, and, altogether, Bartholemy was very much in the position of a

man who should go out to harpoon a sturgeon, and who should find himself confronted by a vicious swordfish.

The Spanish merchantmen of that day were generally well armed, for getting home safely across the Atlantic was often the most difficult part of the treasure-seeking. There were many of these ships, which, although they did not belong to the Spanish navy, might almost be designated as men-of-war, and it was one of these with which our filibustier had now met.

But pirates and fishermen cannot afford to pick and choose. They must take what comes to them and make the best of it, and this is exactly the way in which the matter presented itself to Bartholemy and his men. They held one of their councils around the mast, and after an address from their leader, they decided that come what may, they must attack that Spanish vessel.

So the little pirate sailed boldly toward the big Spaniard, and the latter vessel, utterly astonished at the audacity of this attack, — for the pirates' flag was flying, — lay to, head to the wind, and waited, the gunners standing by their cannon.

When the pirates had come near enough to see and understand the size and power of the vessel they had thought of attacking, they did not, as might have been expected, put about and sail away at the best of their vessel's speed, but they kept straight on their course as if they had been about to fall upon a great, unwieldy merchantman, manned by common sailors.

Perceiving the foolhardiness of the little vessel, the Spanish commander determined to give it a lesson which would teach its captain to understand better the relative power of great vessels and little ones, so, as soon as the pirates' vessel was near enough, he ordered a broadside fired upon it. The Spanish ship had a great many people on board. It had a crew of seventy men, and besides these there were some passengers, and regular marines, and knowing that the captain had determined to fire upon the approaching vessel, everybody had gathered on deck to see the little pirate ship go down.

But the ten great cannon-balls which were shot out at Bartholemy's little craft all missed their aim, and before the guns could be reloaded or the great

ship be got around so as to deliver her other broadside, the pirate vessel was alongside of her. Bartholemy had fired none of his cannon. Such guns were useless against so huge a foe. What he was after was a hand-to-hand combat on the deck of the Spanish ship.

The pirates were all ready for hot work. They had thrown aside their coats and shirts as if each of them were going into a prize fight, and, with their cutlasses in their hands, and their pistols and knives in their belts, they scrambled like monkeys up the sides of the great ship. But Spaniards are brave men and good fighters, and there were more than twice as many of them as there were of the pirates, and it was not long before the latter found out that they could not capture that vessel by boarding it. So over the side they tumbled as fast as they could go, leaving some of their number dead and wounded behind them. They jumped into their own vessel, and then they put off to a short distance to take breath and get ready for a different kind of a fight. The triumphant Spaniards now prepared to get rid of this boat load of half-naked wild beasts, which they could easily do

by taking better aim with their cannon than they had done before.

But to their amazement they soon found that they could do nothing with the guns, nor were they able to work their ship so as to get it into position for effectual shots. Bartholemy and his men laid aside their cutlasses and their pistols, and took up their muskets, with which they were well provided. Their vessel lay within a very short range of the Spanish ship, and whenever a man could be seen through the portholes, or showed himself in the rigging or anywhere else where it was necessary to go in order to work the ship, he made himself a target for the good aim of the pirates. The pirate vessel could move about as it pleased, for it required but a few men to manage it, and so it kept out of the way of the Spanish guns, and its best marksmen, crouching close to the deck, fired and fired whenever a Spanish head was to be seen.

For five long hours this unequal contest was kept up. It might have reminded one of a man with a slender rod and a long, delicate line, who had hooked a big salmon. The man could not pull in the salmon, but, on the other hand, the salmon

could not hurt the man, and in the course of time the big fish would be tired out, and the man would get out his landing-net and scoop him in.

Now Bartholemy thought he could scoop in the Spanish vessel. So many of her men had been shot that the two crews would be more nearly equal. So, boldly, he ran his vessel alongside the big ship and again boarded her. Then there was another great fight on the decks. The Spaniards had ceased to be triumphant, but they had become desperate, and in the furious combat ten of the pirates were killed and four wounded. But the Spaniards fared worse than that; more than half of the men who had not been shot by the pirates went down before their cutlasses and pistols, and it was not long before Bartholemy had captured the great Spanish ship.

It was a fearful and a bloody victory he had gained. A great part of his own men were lying dead or helpless on the deck, and of the Spaniards only forty were left alive, and these, it appears from the accounts, must have been nearly all wounded or disabled.

It was a common habit among the buccaneers,



as well as among the Spaniards, to kill all prisoners who were not able to work for them, but Bartholemy does not seem to have arrived at the stage of depravity necessary for this. So he determined not to kill his prisoners, but he put them all into a boat and let them go where they pleased ; while he was left with fifteen men to work a great vessel which required a crew of five times that number.

But the men who could conquer and capture a ship against such enormous odds, felt themselves fully capable of working her, even with their little crew. Before doing anything in the way of navigation they cleared the decks of the dead bodies, taking from them all watches, trinkets, and money, and then went below to see what sort of a prize they had gained. They found it a very good one indeed. There were seventy-five thousand crowns in money, besides a cargo of cocoa worth five thousand more, and this, combined with the value of the ship and all its fittings, was a great fortune for those days.

When the victorious pirates had counted their gains and had mended the sails and rigging of their new ship, they took what they wanted out of



their own vessel, and left her to sink or to float as she pleased, and then they sailed away in the direction of the island of Jamaica. But the winds did not suit them, and, as their crew was so very small, they could not take advantage of light breezes as they could have done if they had had men enough. Consequently they were obliged to stop to get water before they reached the friendly vicinity of Jamaica.

They cast anchor at Cape St. Anthony on the west end of Cuba. After a considerable delay at this place they started out again to resume their voyage, but it was not long before they perceived, to their horror, three Spanish vessels coming towards them. It was impossible for a very large ship, manned by an extremely small crew, to sail away from those fully equipped vessels, and as to attempting to defend themselves against the overwhelming power of the antagonists,<sup>1</sup> that was too absurd to be thought of even by such a reckless fellow as Bartholemy. So, when the ship was hailed by the Spanish vessels he lay to and waited until a boat's crew boarded him. With the eye of

<sup>1</sup> Antagonists, foes.

a nautical man the Spanish captain of one of the ships perceived that something was the matter with this vessel, for its sails and rigging were terribly cut up in the long fight through which it had passed, and of course he wanted to know what had happened. When he found that the great ship was in the possession of a very small body of pirates, Bartholemy and his men were immediately made prisoners, taken on board the Spanish ship, stripped of everything they possessed, even their clothes, and shut up in the hold. A crew from the Spanish ships was sent to man the vessel which had been captured, and then the little fleet set sail for San Francisco in Campeachy.<sup>1</sup>

An hour had worked a very great change in the fortunes of Bartholemy and his men; in the fine cabin of their grand prize they had feasted and sung, and had gloried over their wonderful success, and now, in the vessel of their captor, they were shut up in the dark, to be enslaved or perhaps executed.

But it is not likely that any one of them either despaired or repented; these are sentiments very little in use among pirates.

<sup>1</sup> Campeachy (käm-pē'-chē), formerly a part of Yucatan.

## CHAPTER V

### THE PIRATE WHO COULD NOT SWIM

**W**HEN the little fleet of Spanish vessels, including the one which had been captured by Bartholemy Portuguez and his men, were on their way to Campeachy,<sup>1</sup> they met with very stormy weather, so that they were separated, and the ship which contained Bartholemy and his companions arrived first at the port for which they were bound.

The captain, who had Bartholemy and the others in charge, did not know what an important capture he had made; he supposed that these pirates were ordinary buccaneers, and it appears that it was his intention to keep them as his own private prisoners, for, as they were all very able-bodied men, they would be extremely useful on a ship. But when his vessel was safely moored, and it became known in the town that he had a com-

<sup>1</sup> See map.

pany of pirates on board, a great many people came from shore to see these savage men, who were probably looked upon very much as though they were a menagerie of wild beasts brought from foreign lands.

Among the sightseers who came to the ship was a merchant of the town who had seen Bartholemy before, and who had heard of his various exploits.<sup>1</sup> He therefore went to the captain of the vessel and informed him that he had on board one of the very worst pirates in the whole world, whose wicked deeds were well known in various parts of the West Indies, and who ought immediately to be delivered up to the civil authorities. This proposal, however, met with no favor from the Spanish captain, who had found Bartholemy a very quiet man, and could see that he was a very strong one, and he did not at all desire to give up such a valuable addition to his crew. But the merchant grew very angry, for he knew that Bartholemy had inflicted great injury on Spanish commerce, and as the captain would not listen to him, he went to the Governor of the town and reported the case. When this

<sup>1</sup> Exploits, notable deeds.

dignitary heard the story he immediately sent a party of officers to the ship, and commanded the captain to deliver the pirate leader into their charge. The other men were left where they were, but Bartholemy was taken away and confined in another ship. The merchant, who seemed to know a great deal about him, informed the authorities that this terrible pirate had been captured several times, but that he had always managed to escape; and, therefore, he was put in irons, and preparations were made to execute him on the next day. For, from what he had heard, the Governor considered that this pirate was no better than a wild beast, and that he should be put to death without even the formality of a trial.

But there was a Spanish soldier on board the ship who seemed to have had some pity, or perhaps some admiration, for the daring pirate, and he thought that if he were to be hung the next day it was no more than right to let him know it, so that when he went in to take some food to Bartholemy he told him what was to happen.

Now this pirate captain was a man who always wanted to have a share in what was to happen, and

he immediately racked his brain to find out what he could do in this case. He had never been in a more desperate situation, but he did not lose heart, and immediately set to work to free himself from his irons, which were probably very clumsy affairs. At last, caring little how much he scratched and tore his skin, he succeeded in getting rid of his fetters, and could move about as freely as a tiger in a cage. To get out of this cage was Bartholemy's first object. It would be comparatively easy, because in the course of time some one would come into the hold, and the athletic buccaneer thought that he could easily get the better of whoever might open the hatch. But the next act in this truly melodramatic performance would be a great deal more difficult ; for in order to escape from the ship it would be absolutely necessary for Bartholemy to swim to shore, and he did not know how to swim, which seems a strange failing in a hardy sailor with so many other nautical<sup>1</sup> accomplishments. In the rough hold where he was shut up, our pirate, peering about, anxious and earnest, discovered two large earthen jars in which wine had

<sup>1</sup> Nautical, of the sea, of sailors.

been brought from Spain, and with these he determined to make a sort of life-preserver. He found some pieces of oiled cloth, which he tied tightly over the open mouths of the jars and fastened them with cords. He was satisfied that this unwieldy contrivance<sup>1</sup> would support him in the water.

Among other things he had found in his rummagings about the hold was an old knife, and with this in his hand he now sat waiting for a good opportunity to attack his sentinel.

This came soon after nightfall. A man descended with a lantern to see that the prisoner was still secure, — let us hope that it was not the soldier who had kindly informed him of his fate, — and as soon as he was fairly in the hold Bartholemy sprang upon him. There was a fierce struggle, but the pirate was quick and powerful, and the sentinel was soon dead. Then, carrying his two jars, Bartholemy climbed swiftly and noiselessly up the short ladder, came out on deck in the darkness, made a rush toward the side of the ship, and leaped overboard. For a moment he sank below the surface, but the two air-tight jars

<sup>1</sup> Contrivance, something contrived, or made with a purpose.





“HE SOON FLOATED OUT OF SIGHT AND HEARING.”



quickly rose and bore him up with them. There was a bustle on board the ship, there was some random firing of muskets in the direction of the splashing which the watch had heard, but none of the balls struck the pirate or his jars, and he soon floated out of sight and hearing. Kicking out with his legs, and paddling as well as he could with one hand while he held on to the jars with the other, he at last managed to reach the land, and ran as fast as he could into the dark woods beyond the town.

Bartholemy was now greatly in fear that, when his escape was discovered, he would be tracked by bloodhounds, — for these dogs were much used by the Spaniards in pursuing escaping slaves or prisoners, — and he therefore did not feel safe in immediately making his way along the coast, which was what he wished to do. If the hounds should get upon his trail, he was a lost man. The desperate pirate, therefore, determined to give the bloodhounds no chance to follow him, and for three days he remained in a marshy forest, in the dark recesses of which he could hide, and where the water, which covered the ground, prevented the

dogs from following his scent. He had nothing to eat except a few roots of water-plants, but he was accustomed to privation, and these kept him alive. Often he heard the hounds baying on the dry land adjoining the marsh, and sometimes he saw at night distant torches, which he was sure were carried by men who were hunting for him.

But at last the pursuit seemed to be given up; and hearing no more dogs and seeing no more flickering lights, Bartholemy left the marsh and set out on his long journey down the coast. The place he wished to reach was called Golpho Triste,<sup>1</sup> which was forty leagues away, but where he had reason to suppose he would find some friends. When he came out from among the trees, he mounted a small hill and looked back upon the town. The public square was lighted, and there in the middle of it he saw the gallows which had been erected for his execution, and this sight, doubtless, animated him very much during the first part of his journey.

The terrible trials and hardships which Bartholemy experienced during his tramp along the

<sup>1</sup> Golpho Triste. See map.

coast were such as could have been endured only by one of the strongest and toughest of men. He had found in the marsh an old gourd, or calabash, which he had filled with fresh water, — for he could expect nothing but sea-water during his journey,— and as for solid food he had nothing but the raw shellfish which he found upon the rocks ; but after a diet of roots, shellfish must have been a very agreeable change, and they gave him all the strength and vigor he needed. Very often he found streams and inlets which he was obliged to ford, and as he could see that they were always filled with alligators, the passage of them was not very pleasant. His method of getting across one of these narrow streams was to hurl rocks into the water until he had frightened away the alligators immediately in front of him, and then, when he had made for himself what seemed to be a free passage, he would dash in and hurry across.

At other times great forests stretched down to the very coast, and through these he was obliged to make his way, although he could hear the roars and screams of wild beasts all about him. Any one who is afraid to go down into a dark cellar to

get some apples from a barrel at the foot of the stairs, can have no idea of the sort of mind possessed by Bartholemy Portuguese. The animals might howl around him and glare at him with their shining eyes, and the alligators might lash the water into foam with their great tails, but he was bound for Golpho Triste and was not to be stopped on his way by anything alive.

But at last he came to something not alive, which seemed to be an obstacle that would certainly get the better of him. This was a wide river, flowing through the inland country into the sea. He made his way up the shore of this river for a considerable distance, but it grew but little narrower, and he could see no chance of getting across. He could not swim, and he had no wine-jars now with which to buoy himself up, and if he had been able to swim, he would probably have been eaten up by alligators soon after he left the shore. But a man in his situation would not be likely to give up readily; he had done so much that he was ready to do more if he could only find out what to do.

Now a piece of good fortune happened to him,

although to an ordinary traveller it might have been considered a matter of no importance whatever. On the edge of the shore, where it had floated down from some region higher up the river, Bartholemy perceived an old board, in which there were some long and heavy rusty nails. Greatly encouraged by this discovery, the indefatigable traveller set about a work which resembled that of the old woman who wanted a needle, and who began to rub a crowbar on a stone in order to reduce it to the proper size. Bartholemy carefully knocked all the nails out of the board, and then finding a large flat stone, he rubbed down one of them until he had formed it into the shape of a rude knife-blade, which he made as sharp as he could. Then with these tools he undertook the construction of a raft, working away like a beaver, and using the sharpened nails instead of his teeth. He cut down a number of small trees, and when he had enough of these slender trunks, he bound them together with reeds and osiers, which he found on the river bank. So, after infinite labor and trial, he constructed a raft which would bear him on the surface of the water. When he had launched this,

he got upon it, gathering up his legs so as to keep out of reach of the alligators, and with a long pole pushed himself off from shore. Sometimes paddling and sometimes pushing his pole against the bottom, he at last got across the river and took up his journey upon dry land.

But our pirate had not progressed very far upon the other side of the river before he met with a new difficulty of a very formidable character. This was a great forest of mangrove<sup>1</sup> trees, which grow in muddy and watery places and which have many roots, some coming down from the branches, and some extending themselves in a hopeless tangle in the water and mud. It would have been impossible for even a stork to walk through this forest, but as there was no way of getting around it Bartholemy determined to go through it, even if he could not walk. No athlete of the present day, no matter if he should be a most accomplished circusman, could reasonably expect to perform the feat which this bold pirate successfully accomplished. For five or six leagues he went through that mangrove forest, never once setting his foot upon the

<sup>1</sup> Mangrove, a tropical fruit.

ground, — by which is meant mud, water, and roots, — but swinging himself by his hands and arms, from branch to branch, as if he had been a great ape, only resting occasionally, drawing himself upon a stout limb where he might sit for a while and get his breath. If he had slipped while he was swinging from one limb to another and had gone down into the mire and roots beneath him, it is likely that he would never have been able to get out alive. But he made no slips. He might not have had the agility and grace of a trapeze performer, but his grasp was powerful and his arms were strong, and so he swung and clutched, and clutched and swung, until he had gone entirely through the forest and had come out on the open coast.



## CHAPTER VI

### HOW BARTHOLEMY RESTED HIMSELF

**I**T was full two weeks from the time that Bartholemy began his most adventurous and difficult journey before he reached the little town of Golpho Triste, where, as he had hoped, he found some of his buccaneer friends. Now that his hardships and dangers were over, and when, instead of roots and shellfish, he could sit down to good, plentiful meals, and stretch himself upon a comfortable bed, it might have been supposed that Bartholemy would have given himself a long rest, but this hardy pirate had no desire for a vacation at this time. Instead of being worn out and exhausted by his amazing exertions and semi-starvation, he arrived among his friends vigorous and energetic and exceedingly anxious to recommence business as soon as possible. He told them of all that had happened to him, what wonderful



good fortune had come to him, and what terrible bad fortune had quickly followed it, and when he had related his adventures and his dangers, he astonished even his piratical friends by asking them to furnish him with a small vessel and about twenty men, in order that he might go back and revenge himself, not only for what had happened to him, but for what would have happened if he had not taken his affairs into his own hands.

To do daring and astounding deeds is part of the business of a pirate, and although it was an uncommonly bold enterprise that Bartholemy contemplated, he got his vessel and he got his men, and away he sailed. After a voyage of about eight days he came in sight of the little seaport town, and sailing slowly along the coast, he waited until nightfall before entering the harbor. Anchored at a considerable distance from shore was the great Spanish ship on which he had been a prisoner, and from which he would have been taken and hung in the public square; the sight of the vessel filled his soul with a savage fury known only to pirates and bull dogs.

As the little vessel slowly approached the great

ship, the people on board the latter thought it was a trading-vessel from shore, and allowed it to come alongside, such small craft seldom coming from the sea. But the moment Bartholemy reached the ship he scrambled up its side almost as rapidly as he had jumped down from it with his two wine-jars a few weeks before, and every one of his crew, leaving their own vessel to take care of itself, scrambled up after him.

Nobody on board was prepared to defend the ship. It was the same old story ; resting quietly in a peaceful harbor, what danger had they to expect ? As usual the pirates had everything their own way ; they were ready to fight, and the others were not, and they were led by a man who was determined to take that ship without giving even a thought to the ordinary alternative of dying in the attempt. The affair was more of a massacre than a combat, and there were people on board who did not know what was taking place until the vessel had been captured.

As soon as Bartholemy was master of the great vessel he gave orders to slip the cable and hoist the sails, for he was anxious to get out of that harbor

as quickly as possible. The fight had apparently attracted no attention in the town, but there were ships in the port whose company the bold buccaneer did not at all desire, and as soon as possible he got his grand prize under way and went sailing out of the port.

Now, indeed, was Bartholemy triumphant; the ship he had captured was a finer one and a richer one than that other vessel which had been taken from him. It was loaded with valuable merchandise, and we may here remark that for some reason or other all Spanish vessels of that day which were so unfortunate as to be taken by pirates seemed to be richly laden.

If our bold pirate had sung wild pirate songs, as he passed the flowing bowl while carousing<sup>1</sup> with his crew in the cabin of the Spanish vessel he had first captured, he now sang wilder songs, and passed more flowing bowls, for this prize was a much greater one than the first. If Bartholemy could have communicated his great good fortune to the other buccaneers in the West Indies, there would have been a boom in piracy which would

<sup>1</sup> Carousing, drinking and sporting.

have threatened great danger to the honesty and integrity of the seafaring men of that region.

But nobody, not even a pirate, has any way of finding out what is going to happen next, and if Bartholemy had had an idea of the fluctuations<sup>1</sup> that were about to occur in the market in which he had made his investments he would have been in a great hurry to sell all his stock very much below par. The fluctuations referred to occurred on the ocean, near the island of Pinos, and came in the shape of great storm waves, which blew the Spanish vessel with all its rich cargo, and its triumphant pirate crew, high up upon the cruel rocks, and wrecked it absolutely and utterly. Bartholemy and his men barely managed to get into a little boat, and row themselves away. All the wealth and treasure which had come to them with the capture of the Spanish vessel, all the power which the possession of that vessel gave them, and all the wild joy which came to them with riches and power were lost to them in as short a space of time as it had taken to gain them.

In the way of well-defined and conspicuous ups

<sup>1</sup> Fluctuations, movements, up and down, like waves.

and downs, few lives surpassed that of Bartholemy Portuguez. But after this he seemed in the language of the old English song, "All in the downs." He had many adventures after the desperate affair in the bay of Campeachy, but they must all have turned out badly for him, and, consequently, very well, it is probable, for divers and sundry Spanish vessels, and, for the rest of his life, he bore the reputation of an unfortunate pirate. He was one of those men whose success seemed to have depended entirely upon his own exertions. If there happened to be the least chance of his doing anything, he generally did it; Spanish cannon, well-armed Spanish crews, manacles, imprisonment, the dangers of the ocean to a man who could not swim, bloodhounds, alligators, wild beasts, awful forests impenetrable to common men, all these were bravely met and triumphed over by Bartholemy.

But when he came to ordinary good fortune, such as any pirate might expect, Bartholemy the Portuguese found that he had no chance at all. He was not a common pirate, and was, therefore, obliged to be content with his uncommon

career. He eventually settled in the island of Jamaica, but nobody knows what became of him. If it so happened that he found himself obliged to make his living by some simple industry, such as the selling of fruit upon a street corner, it is likely he never disposed of a banana or an orange unless he jumped at the throat of a passer-by and compelled him to purchase. As for sitting still and waiting for customers to come to him, such a man as Bartholemy would not be likely to do anything so commonplace.

## CHAPTER VII

### A PIRATE AUTHOR

**I**N the days which we are considering there were all sorts of pirates, some of whom gained much reputation in one way and some in another, but there was one of them who had a disposition different from that of any of his fellows. He was a regular pirate, but it is not likely that he ever did much fighting, for, as he took great pride in the brave deeds of the Brethren of the Coast, he would have been sure to tell us of his own if he had ever performed any. He was a mild-mannered man, and, although he was a pirate, he eventually laid aside the pistol, the musket, and the cutlass, and took up the pen, — a very uncommon weapon for a buccaneer.

This man was John Esquemeling, supposed by some to be a Dutchman, and by others a native of France. He sailed to the West Indies in the year 1666, in the service of the French West India



Company. He went out as a peaceable merchant clerk, and had no more idea of becoming a pirate than he had of going into literature, although he finally did both.

At that time the French West India Company had a colonial establishment on the island of Tortuga, which was principally inhabited, as we have seen before, by buccaneers in all their various grades and stages, from beef-driers to pirates. The French authorities undertook to supply these erratic people with the goods and provisions which they needed, and built storehouses with everything necessary for carrying on the trade. There were plenty of purchasers, for the buccaneers were willing to buy everything which could be brought from Europe. They were fond of good wine, good groceries, good firearms, and ammunition, fine cutlasses, and very often good clothes, in which they could disport themselves when on shore. But they had peculiar customs and manners, and although they were willing to buy as much as the French traders had to sell, they could not be prevailed upon to pay their bills. A pirate is not the sort of a man who generally cares to pay his bills.



When he gets goods in any way, he wants them charged to him, and if that charge includes the features of robbery and murder, he will probably make no objection. But as for paying<sup>1</sup> good money for what is received, that is quite another thing.

That this was the state of feeling on the island of Tortuga was discovered before very long by the French mercantile agents, who then applied to the mother country for assistance in collecting the debts due them, and a body of men, who might be called collectors, or deputy sheriffs, was sent out to the island ; but although these officers were armed with pistols and swords, as well as with authority, they could do nothing with the buccaneers, and after a time the work of endeavoring to collect debts from pirates was given up. And as there was no profit in carrying on business in this way, the mercantile agency was also given up, and its officers were ordered to sell out everything they had on hand, and come home. There was, therefore, a sale, for which cash payments were demanded, and there was a great bargain day on the island of Tortuga. Everything was disposed

of, — the stock of merchandise on hand, the tables, the desks, the stationery, the bookkeepers, the clerks, and the errand boys. The living items of the stock on hand were considered to be property just as if they had been any kind of merchandise, and were sold as slaves.

Now poor John Esquemeling found himself in a sad condition. He was bought by one of the French officials who had been left on the island, and he described his new master as a veritable fiend. He was worked hard, half fed, treated cruelly in many ways, and to add to his misery, his master tantalized<sup>1</sup> him by offering to set him free upon the payment of a sum of money equal to about three hundred dollars. He might as well have been asked to pay three thousand or three million dollars, for he had not a penny in the world.

At last he was so fortunate as to fall sick, and his master, as avaricious as he was cruel, fearing that this creature he owned might die, and thus be an entire loss to him, sold him to a surgeon, very much as one would sell a sick horse to a veterinary

<sup>1</sup> Tantalized, teased.

surgeon, on the principle that he might make something out of the animal by curing him.

His new master treated Esquemeling very well, and after he had taken medicine and food enough to set him upon his legs, and had worked for the surgeon about a year, that kind master offered him his liberty if he would promise, as soon as he could earn the money, to pay him one hundred dollars, which would be a profit to his owner, who had paid but seventy dollars for him. This offer, of course, Esquemeling accepted with delight, and having made the bargain, he stepped forth upon the warm sands of the island of Tortuga a free and happy man. But he was as poor as a church mouse. He had nothing in the world but the clothes on his back, and he saw no way in which he could make money enough to keep himself alive until he had paid for himself. He tried various ways of support, but there was no opening for a young business man in that section of the country, and at last he came to the conclusion that there was only one way by which he could accomplish his object, and he therefore determined to enter into "the wicked order of pirates or robbers at sea."

It must have been a strange thing for a man accustomed to pens and ink, to yardsticks and scales, to feel obliged to enroll himself into a company of bloody, big-bearded pirates, but a man must eat, and buccaneering was the only profession open to our ex-clerk. For some reason or other, certainly not on account of his bravery and daring, Esquemeling was very well received by the pirates of Tortuga. Perhaps they liked him because he was a mild-mannered man and so different from themselves. Nobody was afraid of him, every one felt superior to him, and we are all very apt to like people to whom we feel superior.

As for Esquemeling himself, he soon came to entertain the highest opinion of his pirate companions. He looked upon the buccaneers who had distinguished themselves as great heroes, and it must have been extremely gratifying to those savage fellows to tell Esquemeling all the wonderful things they had done. In the whole of the West Indies there was no one who was in the habit of giving such intelligent attention to the accounts of piratical depredations<sup>1</sup> and savage sea-fights, as

<sup>1</sup> Depredations, robberies, plunderings.

was Esquemeling, and if he had demanded a salary as a listener, there is no doubt that it would have been paid to him.

It was not long before his intense admiration of the buccaneers and their performances began to produce in him the feeling that the history of these great exploits should not be lost to the world, and so he set about writing the lives and adventures of many of the buccaneers with whom he became acquainted.

He remained with the pirates for several years, and during that time worked very industriously getting material together for his history. When he returned to his own country in 1672, having done as much literary work as was possible among the uncivilized surroundings of Tortuga, he there completed a book, which he called "The Buccaneers of America, or The True Account of the Most Remarkable Assaults Committed of Late Years Upon the Coasts of the West Indies by the Buccaneers, etc., by John Esquemeling, One of the Buccaneers, Who Was Present at Those Tragedies."

From this title it is probable that our literary

pirate accompanied his comrades on their various voyages and assaults, in the capacity of reporter, and although he states he was present at many of "those tragedies," he makes no reference to any deeds of valor or cruelty performed by himself, which shows him to have been a wonderfully conscientious historian. There are persons, however, who doubt his impartiality,<sup>1</sup> because, as he liked the French, he always gave the pirates of that nationality the credit for most of the bravery displayed on their expeditions, and all of the magnanimity<sup>2</sup> and courtesy, if there happened to be any, while the surliness, brutality, and extraordinary wickednesses were all ascribed to the English. But be this as it may, Esquemeling's history was a great success. It was written in Dutch and was afterwards translated into English, French, and Spanish. It contained a great deal of information regarding buccaneering in general, and most of the stories of pirates which we have already told, and many of the surprising narrations which are to come, have been taken from the book of this buccaneer historian.

<sup>1</sup> Impartiality, fairness.

<sup>2</sup> Magnanimity, generosity.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE STORY OF ROC, THE BRAZILIAN

HAVING given the history of a very plain and quiet buccaneer, who was a reporter and writer, and who, if he were now living, would be eligible as a member of an Authors' Club, we will pass to the consideration of a regular out-and-out pirate, one from whose masthead would have floated the black flag with its skull and crossbones if that emblematic<sup>1</sup> piece of bunting had been in use by the pirates of the period.

This famous buccaneer was called Roc, because he had to have a name, and his own was unknown, and "the Brazilian," because he was born in Brazil, though of Dutch parents. Unlike most of his fellow-practitioners he did not gradually become a pirate. From his early youth he never had an intention of being anything else. As

<sup>1</sup> Emblematic, having a meaning.



soon as he grew to be a man he became a bloody buccaneer, and at the first opportunity he joined a pirate crew, and had made but a few voyages when it was perceived by his companions that he was destined to become a most remarkable sea-robber. He was offered the command of a ship with a well-armed crew of marine savages, and in a very short time after he had set out on his first independent cruise he fell in with a Spanish ship loaded with silver bullion; having captured this, he sailed with his prize to Jamaica, which was one of the great resorts of the English buccaneers. There his success delighted the community, his talents for the conduct of great piratical operations soon became apparent, and he was generally acknowledged as the Head Pirate of the West Indies.

He was now looked upon as a hero even by those colonists who had no sympathy with pirates, and as for Esquemeling, he simply worshipped the great Brazilian desperado. If he had been writing the life and times of Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, or Mr. Gladstone, he could not have been more enthusiastic in his praises. And



as in *The Arabian Nights* the roc is described as the greatest of birds, so, in the eyes of the buccaneer biographer, this Roc was the greatest of pirates. But it was not only in the mind of the historian that Roc now became famous; the better he became known, the more general was the fear and respect felt for him, and we are told that the mothers of the islands used to put their children to sleep by threatening them with the terrible Roc if they did not close their eyes. This story, however, I regard with a great deal of doubt; it has been told of Saladin and many other wicked and famous men, but I do not believe it is an easy thing to frighten a child into going to sleep. If I found it necessary to make a youngster take a nap, I should say nothing of the condition of affairs in Cuba or of the persecutions of the Armenians.

This renowned pirate from Brazil must have been a terrible fellow to look at. He was strong and brawny, his face was short and very wide, with high cheek-bones, and his expression probably resembled that of a pug-dog. His eyebrows were enormously large and bushy, and from under

them he glared at his mundane<sup>1</sup> surroundings. He was not a man whose spirit could be quelled by looking him steadfastly in the eye. It was his custom in the daytime to walk about, carrying a drawn cutlass, resting easily upon his arm, edge up, very much as a fine gentleman carries his high silk hat, and any one who should impertinently stare or endeavor to quell his high spirits in any other way, would probably have felt the edge of that cutlass descending rapidly through his physical organism.

He was a man who insisted upon being obeyed, and if any one of his crew behaved improperly, or was even found idle, this strict and inexorable master would cut him down where he stood. But although he was so strict and exacting during the business sessions of his piratical year, by which I mean when he was cruising around after prizes, he was very much more disagreeable when he was taking a vacation. On his return to Jamaica after one of his expeditions it was his habit to give himself some relaxation after the hardships and dangers through which he had

<sup>1</sup> Mundane, wordly, of this world.

passed, and on such occasions it was a great comfort to Roc to get himself thoroughly drunk. With his cutlass waving high in the air, he would rush out into the street and take a whack at every one whom he met. As far as was possible the citizens allowed him to have the street to himself, and it was not at all likely that his visits to Jamaica were looked forward to with any eager anticipations.

Roc, it may be said, was not only a bloody pirate, but a blooded one; he was thoroughbred. From the time he had been able to assert his individuality he had been a pirate, and there was no reason to suppose that he would ever reform himself into anything else. There were extenuating<sup>1</sup> circumstances in his case. The appreciative Esquemeling, who might be called the Boswell of the buccaneers, could never have met his hero Roc, when that bushy-bearded pirate was running "amuck" in the streets, for if he had, it is not probable that his book would have been written. He assures us that when Roc was not drunk, he was esteemed, but at the

<sup>1</sup> Extenuating, excusing, making less evil.

same time feared; but there are various ways of gaining esteem, and Roc's method certainly succeeded very well in the case of his literary associate.

As we have seen, the hatred of the Spaniards by the buccaneers began very early in the settlement of the West Indies, and in fact, it is very likely that if there had been no Spaniards, there would never have been any buccaneers; but in all the instances of ferocious enmity toward the Spaniards there has been nothing to equal the feelings of Roc, the Brazilian, upon that subject. His dislike to everything Spanish arose, he declared, from cruelties which had been practised upon his parents by people of that nation, and his main principle of action throughout all his piratical career seems to have been that there was nothing too bad for a Spaniard. The object of his life was to wage bitter war against Spanish ships and Spanish settlements. He seldom gave any quarter to his prisoners, and would often subject them to horrible tortures in order to make them tell where he could find the things he wanted. There is nothing horrible that has

ever been written or told about the buccaneer life, which could not have been told about Roc, the Brazilian. He was a typical pirate.

Roc was very successful in his enterprises, and took a great deal of valuable merchandise to Jamaica, but although he and his crew were always rich men when they went on shore, they did not remain in that condition very long. The buccaneers of that day were all very extravagant, and, moreover, they were great gamblers, and it was not uncommon for them to lose everything they possessed before they had been on shore a week. Then there was nothing for them to do but to go on board their vessels and put out to sea in search of some fresh prize. So far Roc's career had been very much like that of many other Companions of the Coast, differing from them only in respect to intensity and force, but he was a clever man with ideas, and was able to adapt himself to circumstances.

He was cruising about Campeachy without seeing any craft that was worth capturing, when he thought that it would be very well for him to go out on a sort of marine scouting expedition and

find out whether or not there were any Spanish vessels in the bay which were well laden and which were likely soon to come out. So, with a small boat filled with some of his trusty men, he rowed quietly into the port to see what he could discover. If he had had Esquemeling with him, and had sent that mild-mannered observer into the harbor to investigate into the state of affairs, and come back with a report, it would have been a great deal better for the pirate captain, but he chose to go himself, and he came to grief. No sooner did the people on the ships lying in the harbor behold a boat approaching with a big-browed, broad-jawed mariner sitting in the stern, and with a good many more broad-backed, hairy mariners than were necessary pulling at the oars, than they gave the alarm. The well-known pirate was recognized, and it was not long before he was captured. Roc must have had a great deal of confidence in his own powers, or perhaps he relied somewhat upon the fear which his very presence evoked. But he made a mistake this time; he had run into the lion's jaw, and the lion had closed his teeth upon him.

When the pirate captain and his companions were brought before the Governor, he made no pretence of putting them to trial. Buccaneers were outlawed by the Spanish, and were considered as wild beasts to be killed without mercy wherever caught. Consequently Roc and his men were thrown into a dungeon and condemned to be executed. If, however, the Spanish Governor had known what was good for himself, he would have had them killed that night.

During the time that preparations were going on for making examples of these impertinent pirates, who had dared to enter the port of Campeachy, Roc was racking his brains to find some method of getting out of the terrible scrape into which he had fallen. This was a branch of the business in which a capable pirate was obliged to be proficient; if he could not get himself out of scrapes, he could not expect to be successful. In this case there was no chance of cutting down sentinels, or jumping overboard with a couple of wine-jars for a life-preserver, or of doing any of those ordinary things which pirates were in the habit of doing when escaping from their captors.



Roc and his men were in a dungeon on land, inside of a fortress, and if they escaped from this, they would find themselves unarmed in the midst of a body of Spanish soldiers. Their stout arms and their stout hearts were of no use to them now, and they were obliged to depend upon their wits if they had any. Roc had plenty of wit, and he used it well. There was a slave, probably not a negro nor a native, but most likely some European who had been made prisoner, who came in to bring him food and drink, and by the means of this man the pirate hoped to play a trick upon the Governor. He promised the slave that if he would help him, — and he told him it would be very easy to do so, — he would give him money enough to buy his freedom and to return to his friends, and this, of course, was a great inducement<sup>1</sup> to the poor fellow, who may have been an Englishman or a Frenchman in good circumstances at home. The slave agreed to the proposals, and the first thing he did was to bring some writing-materials to Roc, who thereupon began the composition of a letter

<sup>1</sup> Inducement, attraction, furnishing motive.

upon which he based all his hopes of life and freedom.

When he was coming into the bay, Roc had noticed a large French vessel that was lying at some distance from the town, and he wrote his letter as if it had come from the captain of this ship. In the character of this French captain he addressed his letter to the Governor of the town, and in it he stated that he had understood that certain Companions of the Coast, for whom he had great sympathy, — for the French and the buccaneers were always good friends, — had been captured by the Governor, who, he heard, had threatened to execute them. Then the French captain, by the hand of Roc, went on to say that if any harm should come to these brave men, who had been taken and imprisoned when they were doing no harm to anybody, he would swear, in his most solemn manner, that never, for the rest of his life, would he give quarter to any Spaniard who might fall into his hands, and he, moreover, threatened that any kind of vengeance which should become possible for the buccaneers and French united, to inflict upon

the Spanish ships, or upon the town of Campeachy, should be taken as soon as possible after he should hear of any injury that might be inflicted upon the unfortunate men who were then lying imprisoned in the fortress.

When the slave came back to Roc, the letter was given to him with very particular directions as to what he was to do with it. He was to disguise himself as much as possible, so that he should not be recognized by the people of the place, and then in the night he was to make his way out of the town, and early in the morning he was to return as if he had been walking along the shore of the harbor, when he was to state that he had been put on shore from the French vessel in the offing, with a letter which he was to present to the Governor.

The slave performed his part of the business very well. The next day, wet and bedraggled from making his way through the weeds and mud of the coast, he presented himself at the fortress with his letter, and when he was allowed to take it to the Governor, no one suspected that he was a person employed about the place. Having



"WHEN THE SLAVE CAME BACK TO ROC, THE LETTER WAS GIVEN TO HIM WITH VERY PARTICULAR DIRECTIONS."

fulfilled his mission, he departed, and when seen again, he was the same servant whose business it was to carry food to the prisoners.

The Governor read the letter with a disquieted mind; he knew that the French ship which was lying outside the harbor was a powerful vessel and he did not like French ships, anyway. The town had once been taken and very badly treated by a little fleet of French and English buccaneers, and he was very anxious that nothing of the kind should happen again. There was no great Spanish force in the harbor at that time, and he did not know how many buccaneering vessels might be able to gather together in the bay if it should become known that the great pirate Roc had been put to death in Campeachy. It was an unusual thing for a prisoner to have such powerful friends so near by, and the Governor took Roc's case into most earnest consideration. A few hours' reflection was sufficient to convince him that it would be very unsafe to tamper<sup>1</sup> with such a dangerous prize as the pirate Roc, and he determined to get rid of him as soon as possible.

<sup>1</sup> Tamper, meddle.

He felt himself in the position of a man who has stolen a baby-bear, and who hears the roar of an approaching parent through the woods; to throw away the cub and walk off as though he had no idea there were any bears in that forest would be the inclination of a man so situated, and to get rid of the great pirate without provoking the vengeance of his friends was the natural inclination of the Governor.

Now Roc and his men were treated well, and having been brought before the Governor, were told that in consequence of their having committed no overt act of disorder they would be set at liberty and shipped to England, upon the single condition that they would abandon piracy and agree to become quiet citizens in whatever respectable vocation they might select.

To these terms Roc and his men agreed without argument. They declared that they would retire from the buccaneering business, and that nothing would suit them better than to return to the ways of civilization and virtue. There was a ship about to depart for Spain, and on this the Governor gave Roc and his men free passage to the



other side of the ocean. There is no doubt that our buccaneers would have much preferred to have been put on board the French vessel; but as the Spanish Governor had started his prisoners on the road to reform, he did not wish to throw them into the way of temptation by allowing them to associate with such wicked companions as Frenchmen, and Roc made no suggestion of the kind, knowing very well how greatly astonished the French captain would be if the Governor were to communicate with him on the subject.

On the voyage to Spain Roc was on his good behavior, and he was a man who knew how to behave very well when it was absolutely necessary: no doubt there must have been many dull days on board ship when he would have been delighted to gamble, to get drunk, and to run "amuck" up and down the deck. But he carefully abstained from all these recreations, and showed himself to be such an able-bodied and willing sailor that the captain allowed him to serve as one of the crew. Roc knew how to do a great many things; not only could he murder and rob, but he knew how to turn an honest penny when there was no other



way of filling his purse. He had learned among the Indians how to shoot fish with bow and arrows, and on this voyage across the Atlantic he occupied all his spare time in sitting in the rigging and shooting the fish which disported themselves about the vessel. These fish he sold to the officers, and we are told that in this way he earned no less than five hundred crowns, perhaps that many dollars. If this account is true, fish must have been very costly in those days, but it showed plainly that if Roc had desired to get into an honest business, he would have found fish-shooting a profitable occupation. In every way Roc behaved so well that for his sake all his men were treated kindly and allowed many privileges.

But when this party of reformed pirates reached Spain and were allowed to go where they pleased, they thought no more of the oaths they had taken to abandon piracy than they thought of the oaths which they had been in the habit of throwing right and left when they had been strolling about on the island of Jamaica. They had no ship, and not enough money to buy one, but as soon as they could manage it they sailed

back to the West Indies, and eventually found themselves in Jamaica, as bold and as bloody buccaneers as ever they had been.

Not only did Roc cast from him every thought of reformation and a respectable life, but he determined to begin the business of piracy on a grander scale than ever before. He made a compact with an old French buccaneer, named Tributor, and with a large company of buccaneers he actually set out to take a town. Having lost everything he possessed, and having passed such a long time without any employment more profitable than that of shooting fish with a bow and arrows, our doughty<sup>1</sup> pirate now desired to make a grand strike, and if he could take a town and pillage it of everything valuable it contained, he would make a very good fortune in a very short time, and might retire, if he chose, from the active practice of his profession.

The town which Roc and Tributor determined to attack was Merida,<sup>2</sup> in Yucatan, and although this was a bold and rash undertaking, the two pirates were bold and rash enough for anything.

<sup>1</sup> Doughty, valiant.

<sup>2</sup> Merida. See map.

Roc had been a prisoner in Merida, and on account of his knowledge of the town he believed that he and his followers could land upon the coast, and then quietly advance upon the town without their approach being discovered. If they could do this, it would be an easy matter to rush upon the unsuspecting garrison, and, having annihilated <sup>1</sup> these, make themselves masters of the town.

But their plans did not work very well; they were discovered by some Indians, after they had landed, who hurried to Merida and gave notice of the approach of the buccaneers. Consequently, when Roc and his companions reached the town, they found the garrison prepared for them, cannons loaded, and all the approaches guarded. Still the pirates did not hesitate; they advanced fiercely to the attack just as they were accustomed to do when they were boarding a Spanish vessel, but they soon found that fighting on land was very different from fighting at sea. In a marine combat it is seldom that a party of boarders is attacked in the rear by the enemy, although on land such methods of warfare may

<sup>1</sup> Annihilate, destroy entirely.

always be expected; but Roc and Tributor did not expect anything of the kind, and they were, therefore, greatly dismayed when a party of horsemen from the town, who had made a wide détour<sup>1</sup> through the woods, suddenly charged upon their rear. Between the guns of the garrison and the sabres of the horsemen the buccaneers had a very hard time, and it was not long before they were completely defeated. Tributor and a great many of the pirates were killed or taken, and Roc, the Brazilian, had a terrible fall.

This most memorable fall occurred in the estimation of John Esquemeling, who knew all about the attack on Merida, and who wrote the account of it. But he had never expected to be called upon to record that his great hero, Roc, the Brazilian, saved his life, after the utter defeat of himself and his companions, by ignominiously<sup>2</sup> running away. The loyal chronicler had as firm a belief in the absolute inability of his hero to fly from danger as was shown by the Scottish Douglas, when he stood, his back against a mass of stone, and invited his enemies to "Come one,

<sup>1</sup> Détour, a roundabout way.

<sup>2</sup> Ignominiously, shamefully.

come all.'” The bushy-browed pirate of the drawn cutlass had so often expressed his contempt for a soldier who would even surrender, to say nothing of running away, that Esquemeling could scarcely believe that Roc had retreated from his enemies, deserted his friends, and turned his back upon the principles which he had always so truculently proclaimed.

But this downfall of a hero simply shows that Esquemeling, although he was a member of the piratical body, and was proud to consider himself a buccaneer, did not understand the true nature of a pirate. Under the brutality, the cruelty, the dishonesty, and the recklessness of the sea-robbers of those days, there was nearly always meanness and cowardice. Roc, as we have said in the beginning of this sketch, was a typical pirate; under certain circumstances he showed himself to have all those brave and savage qualities which Esquemeling esteemed and revered, and under other circumstances he showed those other qualities that Esquemeling despised, but which are necessary to make up the true character of a pirate.

The historian John seems to have been very

much cut up by the manner in which his favorite hero had rounded off his piratical career, and after that he entirely dropped Roc from his chronicles.

This out-and-out pirate was afterwards living in Jamaica, and probably engaged in new enterprises, but Esquemeling would have nothing more to do with him nor with the history of his deeds.

## CHAPTER IX

### A PIRATE POTENTATE

SOMETIME in the last half of the seventeenth century on a quiet farm in a secluded part of Wales there was born a little boy baby. His father was a farmer, and his mother churned, and tended the cows and the chickens, and there was no reason to imagine that this gentle little baby, born and reared in this rural solitude, would become one of the most formidable pirates that the world ever knew. Yet such was the case.

The baby's name was Henry Morgan, and as he grew to be a big boy a distaste for farming grew with him. So strong was his dislike that when he became a young man, he ran away to the seacoast, for he had a fancy to be a sailor. There he found a ship bound for the West Indies, and in this he started out on his life's career. He had no money to pay his passage, and he therefore followed the



usual custom of those days and sold himself for a term of three years to an agent who was taking out a number of men to work on the plantations. In the places where these men were enlisted they were termed servants, but when they got to the new world, they were generally called slaves and treated as such.

When young Morgan reached the Barbadoes he was resold to a planter, and during his term of service he probably worked a good deal harder and was treated much more roughly than any of the laborers on his father's farm. But as soon as he was a free man he went to Jamaica, and there were few places in the world where a young man could be more free and more independent than in this lawless island.

Here were rollicking and blustering "flibustiers," and here the young man determined to study piracy. He was not a sailor and hunter who by the force of circumstances gradually became a buccaneer, but he deliberately selected his profession, and immediately set to work to acquire a knowledge of its practice. There was a buccaneer ship about to sail from Jamaica, and on this

Morgan enlisted. He was a clever fellow, and very soon showed himself to be a brave and able sailor.

After three or four voyages he acquired a reputation for remarkable coolness in emergencies, and showed an ability to take advantage of favorable circumstances, which was not possessed by many of his comrades. These prominent traits in his character became the foundation of his success. He also proved himself a very good business man, and having saved a considerable amount of money, he joined with some other buccaneers and bought a ship, of which he took command. This ship soon made itself a scourge in the Spanish seas; no other buccaneering vessel was so widely known and so greatly feared, and the English people in these regions were as proud of the young Captain Morgan as if he had been a regularly commissioned admiral, cruising against an acknowledged enemy.

Returning from one of his voyages, Morgan found an old buccaneer, named Mansvelt, in Jamaica, who had gathered together a fleet of vessels with which he was about to sail for the

mainland. This expedition seemed a promising one to Morgan, and he joined it, being elected vice-admiral of the fleet of fifteen vessels. Attacks upon towns had become very popular with the buccaneers, whose leaders were getting to be tired of the retail branch of their business; that is, sailing about in one ship and capturing such merchantmen as it might fall in with.

Mansvelt's expedition took with it not only six hundred fighting pirates, but one writing pirate, for John Esquemeling accompanied it, and so far as the fame and reputation of these adventurers was concerned his pen was mightier than their swords, for had it not been for his account of their deeds very little about them would have been known to the world.

The fleet sailed directly for St. Catherine,<sup>1</sup> an island near Costa Rica, which was strongly fortified by the Spaniards and used by them as a station for ammunition and supplies, and also as a prison. The pirates landed upon the island and made a most furious assault upon the fortifications, and although they were built of stone and well

<sup>1</sup> St. Catherine. See map.

furnished with cannon, the savage assailants met with their usual good fortune. They swarmed over the walls and carried the place at the edge of the cutlass and the mouth of the pistol. In this fierce fight Morgan performed such feats of valor that even some of the Spaniards who had been taken prisoners, were forced to praise his extraordinary courage and ability as a leader.

The buccaneers proceeded to make very good use of their victory. They captured some small adjoining islands and brought the cannon from them to the main fortress, which they put in a good condition of defence. Here they confined all their prisoners and slaves, and supplied the island with an abundance of stores and provisions.

It is believed that when Mansvelt formed the plan of capturing this island, he did so with the idea of founding there a permanent pirate principality, the inhabitants of which should not consider themselves English, French, or Dutch, but plain pirates, having a nationality and country of their own. Had the seed thus planted by Mansvelt and Morgan grown and matured, it is not unlikely that the whole of the West Indies might

now be owned and inhabited by an independent nation, whose founders were the bold buccaneers.

When everything had been made tight and right at St. Catherine, Mansvelt and Morgan sailed for the mainland, for the purpose of attacking an inland town called Nata, but in this expedition they were not successful. The Spanish Governor of the province had heard of their approach, and met them with a body of soldiers so large that they prudently gave up the attempt, — a proceeding not very common with them, but Morgan was not only a dare-devil of a pirate, but a very shrewd Welshman.

They returned to the ships, and after touching at St. Catherine and leaving there, under the command of a Frenchman named Le Sieur Simon, enough men to defend it, they sailed for Jamaica. Everything at St. Catherine was arranged for permanent occupation; there was plenty of fresh water, and the ground could be cultivated, and Simon was promised that additional forces should be sent him so that he could hold the island as a regular station for the assembling and fitting out of pirate vessels.

The permanent pirate colony never came to anything; no reënforcements<sup>1</sup> were sent; Mansvelt died, and the Spaniards gathered together a sufficient force to retake the island of St. Catherine, and make prisoners of Simon and his men. This was a blow to Morgan, who had had great hopes of the fortified station he thought he had so firmly established, but after the project failed he set about forming another expedition.

He was now recognized as buccaneer-in-chief of the West Indies, and he very soon gathered together twelve ships and seven hundred men. Everything was made ready to sail, and the only thing left to be done was to decide what particular place they should favor with a visit.

There were some who advised an attack upon Havana, giving as a reason that in that city there were a great many nuns, monks, and priests, and if they could capture them, they might ask as ransom for them a sum a great deal larger than they could expect to get from the pillage of an ordinary town. But Havana was considered to be too strong a place for a profitable venture, and after

<sup>1</sup> Reënforcements, additional troops.

several suggestions had been made, at last a deserter from the Spanish army, who had joined them, came forward with a good idea. He told the pirates of a town in Cuba, to which he knew the way; it was named Port-au-Prince,<sup>1</sup> and was situated so far inland that it had never been sacked. When the pirates heard that there existed an entirely fresh and unpillaged town, they were filled with as much excited delight as if they had been a party of schoolboys who had just been told where they might find a tree full of ripe apples which had been overlooked by the men who had been gathering the crop.

When Morgan's fleet arrived at the nearest harbor to Port-au-Prince, he landed his men and marched toward the town, but he did not succeed in making a secret attack, as he had hoped. One of his prisoners, a Spaniard, let himself drop overboard as soon as the vessels cast anchor, and swimming ashore, hurried to Port-au-Prince and informed the Governor of the attack which was about to be made on the town. Thus prepared this able commander knew just what to do. He

<sup>1</sup> Port-au-Prince. See map.



marched a body of soldiers along the road by which the pirates must come, and when he found a suitable spot, he caused great trees to be cut down and laid across the road, thus making a formidable barricade. Behind this his soldiers were posted with their muskets and their cannon, and when the pirates should arrive, they would find that they would have to do some extraordinary fighting before they could pass this well-defended barrier.

When Morgan came within sight of this barricade, he understood that the Spaniards had discovered his approach, and so he called a halt. He had always been opposed to unnecessary work, and he considered that it would be entirely unnecessary to attempt to disturb this admirable defence, so he left the road, marched his men into the woods, led them entirely around the barricades, and then, after proceeding a considerable distance, emerged upon a wide plain which lay before the town. Here he found that he would have to fight his way into the city, and, probably much to his surprise, his men were presently charged by a body of cavalry.

Pirates, as a rule, have nothing to do with

horses, either in peace or war, and the Governor of the town no doubt thought that when his well-armed horsemen charged upon these men, accustomed to fighting on the decks of ships, and totally unused to cavalry combats, he would soon scatter and disperse them. But pirates are peculiar fighters; if they had been attacked from above by means of balloons, or from below by mines and explosives, they would doubtless have adapted their style of defence to the method of attack. They always did this, and according to Esquemeling they nearly always got the better of their enemies; but we must remember that in cases where they did not succeed, as happened when they marched against the town of Nata, he says very little about the affair and amplifies only the accounts of their successes.

But the pirates routed the horsemen, and, after a fight of about four hours, they routed all the other Spaniards who resisted them, and took possession of the town. Here they captured a great many prisoners whom they shut up in the churches and then sent detachments out into the country to look for those who had run away.

Then these utterly debased and cruel men began their usual course after capturing a town ; they pillaged, feasted, and rioted ; they gave no thought to the needs of the prisoners whom they had shut up in the churches, many of whom starved to death ; they tortured the poor people to make them tell where they had hid their treasures. They had come for the express purpose of taking everything that the people possessed, and until they had forced from them all that was of the slightest value, they were not satisfied. Even when the poor citizens seemed to have given up everything they owned, they were informed that if they did not pay two heavy ransoms, one to protect themselves from being carried away into slavery, and one to keep their town from being burned, the same punishments would be inflicted upon them.

For two weeks the pirates waited for the unfortunate citizens to go out into the country and find some of their townsmen who had escaped with a portion of their treasure. In those days people did not keep their wealth in banks as they do now, but every man was the custodian of most of

his own possessions, and when they fled from the visitation of an enemy, they took with them everything of value that they could carry. If their fortunes had been deposited in banks, it would doubtless have been more convenient for the pirates.

Before the citizens returned Morgan made a discovery: a negro was captured who carried letters from the Governor of Santiago, a neighboring city, to some of the citizens of Port-au-Prince, telling them not to be in too great a hurry to pay the ransom demanded by the pirates, because he was coming with a strong force to their assistance. When Morgan read these letters, he changed his mind, and thought it would be a wise thing not to stay in that region any longer than could be helped. So he decided not to wait for the unfortunate citizens to collect the heavy ransom he demanded, but told them that if they would furnish him with five hundred head of cattle, and also supply salt and help prepare the meat for shipment, he would make no further demands upon them. This, of course, the citizens were glad enough to do, and when the buccaneers had carried to the ships everything they

had stolen, and when the beef had been put on board, they sailed away.

Morgan directed the course of the fleet to a small island on which he wished to land in order that they might take an account of stock and divide the profits. This the pirates always did as soon as possible after they had concluded one of their nefarious enterprises. But his men were not at all satisfied with what happened on the island. Morgan estimated the total value of the booty to be about fifty thousand dollars, and when this comparatively small sum was divided, many of the men complained that it would not give them enough to pay their debts in Jamaica. They were utterly astonished that after having sacked an entirely fresh town they should have so little, and there is no doubt that many of them believed that their leader was a man who carried on the business of piracy for the purpose of enriching himself, while he gave his followers barely enough to keep them quiet.

There was, however, another cause of discontent among a large body of the men; it appears that the men were very fond of marrow-bones, and

while they were yet at Port-au-Prince and the prisoners were salting the meat which was to go on the ships, the buccaneers went about among them and took the marrow-bones which they cooked and ate while they were fresh. One of the men, a Frenchman, had selected a very fine bone, and had put it by his side while he was preparing some other tidbits, when an Englishman came along, picked up the bone, and carried it away.

Now even in the chronicles of Mother Goose we are told of the intimate connection between Welshmen, thievery, and marrow-bones; for

“Taffy was a Welshman,  
Taffy was a thief,  
Taffy came to my house  
And stole a leg of beef.

“I went to Taffy’s house,  
Taffy wasn’t home,  
Taffy went to my house,  
And stole a marrow-bone.”

What happened to Taffy we do not know, but Morgan was a Welshman, Morgan was a thief, and one of his men had stolen a marrow-bone; there-

fore came trouble. The Frenchman challenged the Englishman; but the latter, being a mean scoundrel, took advantage of his opponent, unfairly stabbed him in the back, and killed him.

Now all the Frenchmen in the company rose in furious protest, and Morgan, wishing to pacify them, had the English assassin put in chains, and promised that he would take him to Jamaica and deliver him to justice. But the Frenchmen declined to be satisfied; they had received but very little money after they had pillaged a rich town, and they believed that their English companions were inclined to take advantage of them in every way, and consequently the greater part of them banded together and deliberately deserted Morgan, who was obliged to go back to Jamaica with not more than half his regular forces, doubtless wishing that the cattle on the island of Cuba had been able to get along without marrow-bones.



## CHAPTER X

### THE STORY OF A HIGH-MINDED PIRATE

**A**FTER having considered the extraordinary performances of so many of those execrable<sup>1</sup> wretches, the buccaneers, it is refreshing and satisfactory to find that there were exceptions even to the rules which governed the conduct and general make-up of the ordinary pirate of the period, and we are therefore glad enough to tell the story of a man, who, although he was an out-and-out buccaneer, possessed some peculiar characteristics which give him a place of his own in the history of piracy.

In the early part of these sketches we have alluded to a gentleman of France, who, having become deeply involved in debt, could see no way of putting himself in a condition to pay his creditors but to go into business of some kind. He had no mercantile education, he had not

<sup>1</sup> Execrable, abominable.

learned any profession, and it was therefore necessary for him to do something for which a previous preparation was not absolutely essential.

After having carefully considered all the methods of making money which were open to him under the circumstances, he finally concluded to take up piracy.

The French gentleman whose adventures we are about to relate was a very different man from John Esquemeling, who was a literary pirate and nothing more. Being of a clerkly disposition, the gentle John did not pretend to use the sabre or the pistol. His part in life was simply to watch his companions fight, burn, and steal, while his only weapon was his pen, with which he set down their exploits and thereby murdered their reputations.

But Monsieur Raveneau de Lussan was both buccaneer and author, and when he had finished his piratical career, he wrote a book in which he gave a full account of it, thus showing that although he had not been brought up to a business life, he had very good ideas about money-making.

More than that, he had very good ideas about his own reputation, and instead of leaving his

exploits and adventures to be written up by other people, — that is, if any one should think it worth while to do so, — he took that business into his own hands. He was well educated, he had been brought up in good society, and as he desired to return to that society it was natural for him to wish to paint his own portrait as a buccaneer. Pictures of that kind as they were ordinarily executed were not at all agreeable to the eyes of the cultivated classes of France, and so M. de Lussan determined to give his personal attention not only to his business speculations, but to his reputation. He went out as a buccaneer in order to rob the Spaniards of treasure with which to pay his honest debts, and, in order to prevent his piratical career being described in the coarse and disagreeable fashion in which people generally wrote about pirates, he determined to write his own adventures.

If a man wishes to appear well before the world, it is often a very good thing for him to write his autobiography, especially if there is anything a little shady in his career, and it may be that de Lussan's reputation as a high-minded pirate de-

pende somewhat on the book he wrote after he had put down the sword and taken up the pen ; but if he gave a more pleasing color to his proceedings than they really deserved, we ought to be glad of it. For, even if de Lussan the buccaneer was in some degree a creature of the imagination of de Lussan the author, we have a story which is much more pleasing and, in some respects, more romantic than stories of ordinary pirates could possibly be made unless the writer of such stories abandoned fact altogether and plunged blindly into fiction.

Among the good qualities of de Lussan was a pious disposition. He had always been a religious person, and, being a Catholic, he had a high regard and veneration for religious buildings, for priests, and for the services of the church, and when he had crossed the Atlantic in his ship, the crew of which was composed of desperadoes of various nations, and when he had landed upon the western continent, he wished still to conform to the religious manners and customs of the old world.

Having a strong force under his command and possessing, in common with most of the gentle-

men of that period, a good military education, it was not long after he landed on the mainland before he captured a small town. The resistance which he met was soon overcome, and our high-minded pirate found himself in the position of a conqueror with a community at his mercy. As his piety now raised itself above all his other attributes, the first thing that he did was to repair to the principal church of the town, accompanied by all his men, and here, in accordance with his commands, a Te Deum was sung and services were conducted by the priests in charge. Then, after having properly performed his religious duties, de Lussan sent his men through the town with orders to rob the inhabitants of everything valuable they possessed.

The ransacking and pillaging of the houses continued for some time, but when the last of his men had returned with the booty they had collected, the high-minded chief was dissatisfied. The town appeared to be a good deal poorer than he had expected, and as the collection seemed to be so very small, de Lussan concluded that in some way or other he must pass around the hat again. While

he was wondering how he should do this he happened to hear that on a sugar plantation not very far away from the town there were some ladies of rank who, having heard of the approach of the pirates, had taken refuge there, thinking that even if the town should be captured, their savage enemies would not wander into the country to look for spoils and victims.

But these ladies were greatly mistaken. When de Lussan heard where they were, he sent out a body of men to make them prisoners and bring them back to him. They might not have any money or jewels in their possession, but as they belonged to good families who were probably wealthy, a good deal of money could be made out of them by holding them and demanding a heavy ransom for their release. So the ladies were all brought to town and shut up securely until their friends and relatives managed to raise enough money to pay their ransom and set them free, and then, I have no doubt, de Lussan advised them to go to church and offer up thanks for their happy deliverance.

As our high-minded pirate pursued his plunder-

ing way along the coast of South America, he met with a good many things which jarred upon his sensitive nature — things he had not expected when he started out on his new career. One of his disappointments was occasioned by the manners and customs of the English buccaneers under his command. These were very different from the Frenchmen of his company, for they made not the slightest pretence to piety.

When they had captured a town or a village, the Englishmen would go to the churches, tear down the paintings, chop the ornaments from the altars with their cutlasses, and steal the silver crucifixes,<sup>1</sup> the candlesticks, and even the communion services. Such conduct gave great pain to de Lussan. To rob and destroy the property of churches was in his eyes a great sin, and he never suffered anything of the kind if he could prevent it. When he found in any place which he captured a wealthy religious community or a richly furnished church, he scrupulously refrained from taking anything or from doing damage to property, and contented himself with demanding heavy indemnity, which

<sup>1</sup> Crucifixes, small crosses used in worship.



the priests were obliged to pay as a return for the pious exemption which he granted them.

But it was very difficult to control the Englishmen. They would rob and destroy a church as willingly as if it were the home of a peaceful family, and although their conscientious commander did everything he could to prevent their excesses, he did not always succeed. If he had known what was likely to happen, his party would have consisted entirely of Frenchmen.

Another thing which disappointed and annoyed the gentlemanly de Lussan was the estimation in which the buccaneers were held by the ladies of the country through which he was passing. He soon found that the women in the Spanish settlements had the most horrible ideas regarding the members of the famous "Brotherhood of the Coast." To be sure, all the Spanish settlers, and a great part of the natives of the country, were filled with horror and dismay whenever they heard that a company of buccaneers was within a hundred miles of their homes, and it is not surprising that this was the case, for the stories of the atrocities and cruelties of these desperadoes had spread over the western world.

But the women of the settlements looked upon the buccaneers with greater fear and abhorrence<sup>1</sup> than the men could possibly feel, for the belief was almost universal among them that buccaneers were terrible monsters of cannibal habits who delighted in devouring human beings, especially if they happened to be young and tender. This ignorance of the true character of the invaders of the country was greatly deplored by de Lussan. He had a most profound pity for those simple-minded persons who had allowed themselves to be so deceived in regard to the real character of himself and his men, and whenever he had an opportunity, he endeavored to persuade the ladies who fell in his way that sooner than eat a woman he would entirely abstain from food.

On one occasion, when politely conducting a young lady to a place of confinement, where in company with other women of good family she was to be shut up until their relatives could pay handsome ransoms for their release, he was very much surprised when she suddenly turned to him with tears in her eyes, and besought him not to devour

<sup>1</sup> Abhorrence, extreme dislike.

her. This astonishing speech so wounded the feelings of the gallant Frenchman that for a moment he could not reply, and when he asked her what had put such an unreasonable fear in her mind, she could only answer that she thought he looked hungry, and that perhaps he would not be willing to wait until — And there she stopped, for she could not bring her mind to say — until she was properly prepared for the table.

“What!” exclaimed the high-minded pirate. “Do you suppose that I would eat you in the street?” And as the poor girl, who was now crying, would make him no answer, he fell into a sombre silence which continued until they had reached their destination.

The cruel aspersions<sup>1</sup> which were cast upon his character by the women of the country were very galling to the chivalrous soul of this gentleman of France, and in every way possible he endeavored to show the Spanish ladies that their opinions of him were entirely incorrect, and even if his men were rather a hard lot of fellows, they were not cannibals.

The high-minded pirate had now two principal

<sup>1</sup> Aspersions, false tales.

objects before him. One was to lay his hand upon all the treasure he could find, and the other was to show the people of the country, especially the ladies, that he was a gentleman of agreeable manners and a pious turn of mind.

It is highly probable that for some time the hero of this story did not succeed in his first object as well as he would have liked. A great deal of treasure was secured, but some of it consisted of property which could not be easily turned into cash or carried away, and he had with him a body of rapacious<sup>1</sup> and conscienceless scoundrels who were continually clamoring for as large a share of the available spoils — such as jewels, money, and small articles of value — as they could induce their commander to allow them, and, in consequence of this greediness of his own men, his share of the plunder was not always as large as it ought to be.

But in his other object he was very much more successful, and, in proof of this, we have only to relate an interesting and remarkable adventure which befell him. He laid siege to a large town, and, as the place was well defended by fortifica-

<sup>1</sup> Rapacious, greedy, grasping.

tions and armed men, a severe battle took place before it was captured. But at last the town was taken, and de Lussan and his men having gone to church to give thanks for their victory, — his Englishmen being obliged to attend the services no matter what they did afterward, — he went diligently to work to gather from the citizens their valuable and available possessions. In this way he was brought into personal contact with a great many of the people of the town, and among the acquaintances which he made was that of a young Spanish lady of great beauty.

The conditions and circumstances in the midst of which this lady found herself after the city had been taken, were very peculiar. She had been the wife of one of the principal citizens, the treasurer of the town, who was possessed of a large fortune, and who lived in one of the best houses in the place; but during the battle with the buccaneers, her husband, who fought bravely in defence of the place, was killed, and she now found herself not only a widow, but a prisoner in the hands of those ruthless<sup>1</sup> pirates whose very name had struck

<sup>1</sup> Ruthless, without mercy.

terror into the hearts of the Spanish settlers. Plunged into misery and despair, it was impossible for her to foresee what was going to happen to her.

As has been said, the religious services in the church were immediately followed by the pillage of the town; every house was visited, and the trembling inhabitants were obliged to deliver up their treasures to the savage fellows who tramped through their halls and rooms, swearing savagely when they did not find as much as they expected, and laughing with wild glee at any unusual discovery of jewels or coin.

The buccaneer officers as well as the men assisted in gathering in the spoils of the town, and it so happened that M. Raveneau de Lussan, with his good clothes and his jaunty hat with a feather in it, selected the house of the late treasurer of the city as a suitable place for him to make his investigations. He found there a great many valuable articles and also found the beautiful young widow.

The effect produced upon the mind of the lady when the captain of the buccaneers entered her house was a very surprising one. Instead of be-

holding a savage, brutal ruffian, with ragged clothes and gleaming teeth, she saw a handsome gentleman, as well dressed as circumstances would permit, very polite in his manners, and with as great a desire to transact his business without giving her any more inconvenience than was necessary, as if he had been a tax-collector. If all the buccaneers were such agreeable men as this one, she and her friends had been laboring under a great mistake.

De Lussan did not complete his examination of the treasurer's house in one visit, and during the next two or three days the young widow not only became acquainted with the character of buccaneers in general, but she learned to know this particular buccaneer very well, and to find out what an entirely different man he was from the savage fellows who composed his company. She was grateful to him for his kind manner of appropriating her possessions, she was greatly interested in his society, — for he was a man of culture and information, — and in less than three days she found herself very much in love with him. There was not a man in the whole town who, in her



opinion, could compare with this gallant commander of buccaneers.

It was not very long before de Lussan became conscious of the favor he had found in the eyes of this lady ; for as a buccaneer could not be expected to remain very long in one place, it was necessary, if this lady wished the captor of her money and treasure to know that he had also captured her heart, that she must not be slow in letting him know the state of her affections, and being a young person of a very practical mind she promptly informed de Lussan that she loved him and desired him to marry her.

The gallant Frenchman was very much amazed when this proposition was made to him, which was in the highest degree complimentary. It was very attractive to him — but he could not understand it. The lady's husband had been dead but a few days — he had assisted in having the unfortunate gentleman properly buried — and it seemed to him very unnatural that the young widow should be in such an extraordinary hurry to prepare a marriage feast before the funeral baked meats had been cleared from the table.

There was but one way in which he could explain to himself this remarkable transition from grief to a new affection. He believed that the people of this country were like their fruits and their flowers. The oranges might fall from the trees, but the blossoms would still be there. Husband and wives or lovers might die, but in the tropical hearts of these people it was not necessary that new affections should be formed, for they were already there, and needed only some one to receive them.

As he did not undertake his present expedition for the purpose of marrying ladies, no matter how beautiful they might be, it is quite natural that de Lussan should not accept the proffered hand of the young widow. But when she came to detail her plans, he found that it would be well worth his while to carefully consider her project.

The lady was by no means a thoughtless young creature, carried away by a sudden attachment. Before making known to de Lussan her preference for him above all other men, she had given the subject her most careful and earnest consideration, and had made plans which in her opinion would

enable the buccaneer captain and herself to settle the matter to the satisfaction of all parties.

When de Lussan heard the lady's scheme, he was as much surprised by her businesslike ability as he had been by the declaration of her affection for him. She knew very well that he could not marry her and take her with him. Moreover, she did not wish to go. She had no fancy for such wild expeditions and such savage companions. Her plans were for peace and comfort and a happy domestic life. In a word, she desired that the handsome de Lussan should remain with her.

Of course the gentleman opened his eyes very wide when he heard this, but she had a great deal to say upon the subject, and she had not omitted any of the details which would be necessary for the success of her scheme.

The lady knew just as well as the buccaneer captain knew that the men under his command would not allow him to remain comfortably in that town with his share of the plunder, while they went on without a leader to undergo all sorts of hardships and dangers, perhaps defeat and death. If he announced his intention of withdrawing from the

band, his enraged companions would probably kill him. Consequently a friendly separation between himself and his buccaneer followers was a thing not to be thought of, and she did not even propose it.

Her idea was a very different one. Just as soon as possible, that very night, de Lussan was to slip quietly out of the town, and make his way into the surrounding country. She would furnish him with a horse, and tell him the way he should take, and he was not to stop until he had reached a secluded spot, where she was quite sure the buccaneers would not be able to find him, no matter how diligently they might search. When they had entirely failed in every effort to discover their lost captain, who they would probably suppose had been killed by wandering Indians, — for it was impossible that he could have been murdered in the town without their knowledge, — they would give him up as lost and press on in search of further adventures.

When the buccaneers were far away, and all danger from their return had entirely passed, then the brave and polite Frenchman, now no longer a buccaneer, could safely return to the town, where

the young widow would be most happy to marry him, to lodge him in her handsome house, and to make over to him all the large fortune and estates which had been the property of her late husband.

This was a very attractive offer surely, a beautiful woman and a handsome fortune. But she offered more than this. She knew that a gentleman who had once captured and despoiled the town might feel a little delicacy in regard to marrying and settling there and becoming one of its citizens, and therefore she was prepared to remove any objections which might be occasioned by such considerate sentiments on his part.

She assured him that if he would agree to her plan, she would use her influence with the authorities, and would obtain for him the position of city treasurer, which her husband had formerly held. And when he declared that such an astounding performance must be utterly impossible, she started out immediately, and having interviewed the Governor of the town and other municipal<sup>1</sup> officers, secured their signature to a paper in which they promised that if M. de Lussan would accept the

<sup>1</sup> Municipal, of a city or town.

proposals which the lady had made, he would be received most kindly by the officers and citizens of the town; that the position of treasurer would be given to him, and that all the promises of the lady should be made good.

Now our high-minded pirate was thrown into a great quandary, and although at first he had had no notion whatever of accepting the pleasant proposition which had been made to him by the young widow, he began to see that there were many good reasons why the affection, the high position, and the unusual advantages which she had offered to him might perhaps be the very best fortune which he could expect in this world. In the first place, if he should marry this charming young creature and settle down as a respected citizen and an officer of the town, he would be entirely freed from the necessity of leading the life of a buccaneer, and this life was becoming more and more repugnant to him every day, — not only on account of the highly disagreeable nature of his associates and their reckless deeds, but because the country was becoming aroused, and the resistance to his advances was growing stronger and stronger. In the next attack

he made upon a town or village he might receive a musket ball in his body, which would end his career and leave his debts in France unpaid.

More than that, he was disappointed, as has been said before, in regard to the financial successes he had expected. At that time he saw no immediate prospect of being able to go home with money enough in his pocket to pay off his creditors, and if he did not return to his native land under those conditions, he did not wish to return there at all. Under these circumstances it seemed to be wise and prudent, that if he had no reason to expect to be able to settle down honorably and peaceably in France, to accept this opportunity to settle honorably, peaceably, and in every way satisfactorily in America.

It is easy to imagine the pitching and the tossing in the mind of our French buccaneer. The more he thought of the attractions of the fair widow and of the wealth and position which had been offered him, the more he hated all thoughts of his piratical crew, and of the dastardly and cruel character of the work in which they were engaged. If he could have trusted the officers and citizens of the town,



there is not much doubt that he would have married the widow, but those officers and citizens were Spaniards, and he was a Frenchman. A week before the inhabitants of the place had been prosperous, contented, and happy. Now they had been robbed, insulted, and in many cases ruined, and he was commander of the body of desperadoes who had robbed and ruined them. Was it likely that they would forget the injuries which he had inflicted upon them simply because he had married a wealthy lady of the town and had kindly consented to accept the office of city treasurer?

It was much more probable that when his men had really left that part of the country the citizens would forget all their promises to him and remember only his conduct toward them, and that even if he remained alive long enough to marry the lady and take the position offered him, it would not be long before she was again a widow and the office vacant.

So de Lussan shut his eyes to the tempting prospects which were spread out before him, and preferring rather to be a live buccaneer than a dead city treasurer, he told the beautiful widow that he

could not marry her and that he must go forth again into the hard, unsympathetic world to fight, to burn, to steal, and to be polite. Then, fearing that if he remained, he might find his resolution weakened, he gathered together his men and his pillage, and sadly went away, leaving behind him a joyful town and a weeping widow.

If the affection of the young Spanish lady for the buccaneer chief was sufficient to make her take an interest in his subsequent<sup>1</sup> career, she would probably have been proud of him, for the ladies of those days had a high opinion of brave men and successful warriors. De Lussan soon proved that he was not only a good fighter, but that he was also an able general, and his operations on the western coast of South America were more like military campaigns than ordinary expeditions of lawless buccaneers.

He attacked and captured the city of Panama,<sup>2</sup> always an attractive prize to the buccaneer forces, and after that he marched down the western coast of South America, conquering and sacking many towns. As he now carried on his business in a somewhat wholesale way, it could not fail to bring

<sup>1</sup> Subsequent, following, later.

<sup>2</sup> Panama. See map.

him in a handsome profit, and in the course of time he felt that he was able to retire from the active practice of his profession and to return to France.

But as he was going back into the circles of respectability, he wished to do so as a respectable man. He discarded his hat and plume, he threw away his great cutlass and his heavy pistols, and attired in the costume of a gentleman in society he prepared himself to enter again upon his old life. He made the acquaintance of some of the French colonial officers in the West Indies, and obtaining from them letters of introduction to the Treasurer-General of France, he went home as a gentleman who had acquired a fortune by successful enterprises in the new world.

The pirate who not only possesses a sense of propriety and a sensitive mind, but is also gifted with an ability to write a book in which he describes his own actions and adventures, is to be credited with unusual advantages, and as Raveneau de Lussan possessed these advantages, he has come down to posterity as a high-minded pirate.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE GREAT BLACKBEARD COMES UPON THE STAGE

SO long as the people of the Carolinas were prosperous and able to capture and execute pirates who interfered with their trade, the Atlantic sea-robbers kept away from their ports, but this prosperity did not last. Indian wars broke out, and in the course of time the colonies became very much weakened and impoverished, and then it was that the harbor of Charles Town began to be again interesting to the pirates.

About this time one of the most famous of sea-robbers was harassing<sup>1</sup> the Atlantic coast of North America, and from New England to the West Indies he was known as the great pirate Blackbeard. This man, whose real name was Thatch, was a most terrible fellow in appearance as well as action. He wore a long, heavy, black beard,

<sup>1</sup> Harassing, troubling.

which it was his fancy to separate into tails, each one tied with a colored ribbon, and often tucked behind his ears. Some of the writers of that day declared that the sight of this beard would create more terror in any port of the American seaboard than would the sudden appearance of a fiery comet. Across his brawny breast he carried a sort of sling in which hung not less than three pairs of pistols in leathern holsters, and these, in addition to his cutlass and a knife or two in his belt, made him a most formidable-looking fellow.

Some of the fanciful recreations of Blackbeard show him to have been a person of consistent purpose. Even in his hours of rest, when he was not fighting or robbing, his savage soul demanded some interesting excitement. Once he was seated at table with his mate and two or three sailors, and when the meal was over, he took up a pair of pistols, and cocking them put them under the table. This peculiar action caused one of the sailors to remember very suddenly that he had something to do on deck, and he immediately disappeared. But the others looked at their captain in astonishment, wondering what he would

do next. They soon found out ; for crossing the pistols, still under the table, he fired them. One ball hit the mate in the leg, but the other struck no one. When asked what he meant by this strange action, he replied that if he did not shoot one of his men now and then, they would forget what sort of a person he was.

At another time he invented a game ; he gathered his officers and crew together and told them that they were going to play that they were living in the lower regions. Thereupon the whole party followed him down in the hold. The hatches and all the other openings were closed, and then Blackbeard began to illuminate the scene with fire and brimstone. The sulphur burned, the fumes rose, a ghastly light spread over the countenances of the desperadoes, and very soon some of them began to gasp and cough and implore the captain to let in some fresh air, but Blackbeard was bound to have a good game, and he proceeded to burn more brimstone. He laughed at the gasping fellows about him and declared that he would be just as willing to breathe the fumes of sulphur as common air. When at last he threw open the hatches, some of

the men were almost dead, but their stalwart captain had not even sneezed.

In the early part of the eighteenth century Blackbeard made his headquarters in one of the inlets on the North Carolina coast, and there he ruled as absolute king, for the settlers in the vicinity seemed to be as anxious to oblige him as the captains of the merchantmen sailing along the coast were anxious to keep out of his way. On one of his voyages Blackbeard went down the coast as far as Honduras,<sup>1</sup> where he took a good many prizes, and as some of the crews of the captured vessels enlisted under him he sailed north with a stronger force than ever before, having a large ship of forty guns, three smaller vessels, and four hundred men. With this little fleet Blackbeard made for the coast of South Carolina, and anchored outside the harbor of Charles Town. He well understood the present condition of the place and was not in the least afraid that the citizens would hang him up on the shores of the bay.

Blackbeard began work without delay. Several well-laden ships — the Carolinians having no idea

<sup>1</sup> Honduras. See map.



that pirates were waiting for them — came sailing out to sea and were immediately captured. One of these was a very important vessel, for it not only carried a valuable cargo, but a number of passengers, many of them people of note, who were on their way to England. One of these was a Mr. Wragg, who was a member of the Council of the Province. It might have been supposed that when Blackbeard took possession of this ship, he would have been satisfied with the cargo and the money which he found on board, and having no use for prominent citizens, would have let them go their way; but he was a trader as well as a plunderer, and he therefore determined that the best thing to do in this case was to put an assorted lot of highly respectable passengers upon the market and see what he could get for them. He was not at the time in need of money or provisions, but his men were very much in want of medicines, so he decided to trade off his prisoners for pills, potions, plasters, and all sorts of apothecary's supplies.

He put three of his pirates in a boat, and with them one of the passengers, a Mr. Marks, who was commissioned as Blackbeard's special agent, with

orders to inform the Governor that if he did not immediately send the medicines required, amounting in value to about three hundred pounds, and if he did not allow the pirate crew of the boat to return in safety, every one of the prisoners would be hanged from the yard-arm of his ship.

The boat rowed away to the distant town, and Blackbeard waited two days for its return, and then he grew very angry, for he believed that his messengers had been taken into custody, and he came very near hanging Mr. Wragg and all his companions. But before he began to satisfy his vengeance, news came from the boat. It had been upset in the bay, and had had great trouble in getting to Charles Town, but it had arrived there at last. Blackbeard now waited a day or two longer; but as no news came from Mr. Marks, he vowed he would not be trifled with by the impudent people of Charles Town, and swore that every man, woman, and child among the prisoners should immediately prepare to be hanged.

Of course the unfortunate prisoners in the pirate ship were in a terrible state of mind during the absence of Mr. Marks. They knew very well that

they could expect no mercy from Blackbeard if the errand should be unsuccessful, and they also knew that the Charles Town people would not be likely to submit to such an outrageous demand upon them; so they trembled and quaked by day and by night, and when at last they were told to get ready to be hanged, every particle of courage left them, and they proposed to Blackbeard that if he would spare their lives, and that if it should turn out that their fellow-citizens had decided to sacrifice them for the sake of a few paltry drugs, they would take up the cause of the pirates; they would show Blackbeard the best way to sail into the harbor, and they would join with him and his men in attacking the city and punishing the inhabitants for their hard-hearted treatment of their unfortunate fellow-citizens.

This proposition pleased Blackbeard immensely; it would have been like a new game to take Mr. Wragg to the town and make him fight his fellow-members of the Council of the Province, and so he rescinded<sup>1</sup> his order for a general execution, and bade his prisoners prepare to join with his pirates

<sup>1</sup> Rescinded, cancelled, countermanded.

when he should give the word for an assault upon their city.

In the meantime there was a terrible stir in Charles Town. When the Governor and citizens received the insolent and brutal message of Blackbeard, they were filled with rage as well as consternation, and if there had been any way of going out to sea to rescue their unhappy fellow-citizens, every able-bodied man in the town would have enlisted in the expedition. But they had no vessels of war, and they were not even in a position to arm any of the merchantmen in the harbor. It seemed to the Governor and his council that there was nothing for them to do but to submit to the demands of Blackbeard, for they very well knew that he was a scoundrel who would keep his word, and also that whatever they did must be done quickly, for there were the three swaggering pirates in the town, strutting about the streets as if they owned the place. If this continued much longer, it would be impossible to keep the infuriated citizens from falling upon these blustering rascals and bringing their impertinence to a summary end. If this should happen, it would be a terrible thing; for not only

would Mr. Wragg and his companions be put to death, but the pirates would undoubtedly attack the town, which was in a very poor position for defence.

Consequently the drugs were collected with all possible haste, and Mr. Marks and the pirates were sent with them to Blackbeard. We do not know whether or not that bedizened<sup>1</sup> cutthroat was satisfied with the way things turned out; for, having had the idea of going to Charles Town and obliging the prisoners to help him confiscate the drugs and chemicals, he may have preferred this unusual proceeding to a more commonplace transaction; but as the medicine had arrived he accepted it, and having secured all possible booty and money from the ships he had captured, and having stripped his prisoners of the greater part of their clothing, he set them on shore to walk to Charles Town as well as they could. They had a miserably difficult time, making their way through the woods and marshes, for there were women and children among them who were scarcely equal to the journey. One of the children was a little boy, the son of Mr. Wragg, who afterward became a very prominent

<sup>1</sup> Bedizened, adorned in bad taste.

man in the colonies. He rose to such a high position, not only among his countrymen, but in the opinion of the English government, that when he died, about the beginning of the Revolution, a tablet to his memory was placed in Westminster Abbey, which is, perhaps, the first instance of such an honor being paid to an American.

Having now provided himself with medicines enough to keep his wild crew in good physical condition, no matter how much they might feast and frolic on the booty they had obtained from Charles Town, Blackbeard sailed back to his North Carolina haunts and took a long vacation, during which time he managed to put himself on very good terms with the Governor and officials of the country. He had plenty of money and was willing to spend it, and so he was allowed to do pretty much as he pleased, provided he kept his purse open and did not steal from his neighbors.

But Blackbeard became tired of playing the part of a make-believe respectable citizen, and having spent the greater part of his money, he wanted to make some more. Consequently he fitted out a small vessel, and declaring that he was going on a



legitimate commercial cruise, he took out regular papers for a port in the West Indies and sailed away, as if he had been a mild-mannered New England mariner going to catch codfish. The officials of the town of Bath, from which he sailed, came down to the ship and shook hands with him and hoped he would have good success.

After a moderate absence he returned to Bath, bringing with him a large French merchant vessel, with no people on board, but loaded with a valuable cargo of sugar and other goods. This vessel he declared he had found deserted at sea, and he therefore claimed it as a legitimate prize. Knowing the character of this bloody pirate, and knowing how very improbable it was that the captain and all the crew of a valuable merchant vessel, with nothing whatever the matter with her, would go out into their boats and row away, leaving their ship to become the property of any one who might happen along, it may seem surprising that the officials of Bath appeared to have no doubt of the truth of Blackbeard's story, and allowed him freely to land the cargo on the French ship and store it away as his own property.



But people who consort with pirates cannot be expected to have very lively consciences, and although there must have been persons in the town with intelligence enough to understand the story of pitiless murder told by that empty vessel, whose very decks and masts must have been regarded as silent witnesses that her captain and crew did not leave her of their own free will, few in the town interfered with the thrifty Blackbeard or caused any public suspicion to fall upon the propriety of his actions.

## CHAPTER XII

### A TRUE-HEARTED SAILOR DRAWS HIS SWORD

**F**EELING now quite sure that he could do what he pleased on shore as well as at sea, Blackbeard swore more, swaggered more, and whenever he felt like it, sailed up and down the coast and took a prize or two to keep the pot boiling for himself and his men.

On one of these expeditions he went to Philadelphia, and, having landed, he walked about to see what sort of a place it was, but the Governor of the state, hearing of his arrival, quickly arranged to let him know that the Quaker city allowed no black-hearted pirate, with a ribbon-bedecked beard, to promenade on Chestnut and Market streets, and promptly issued a warrant for the sea-robber's arrest. But Blackbeard was too sharp and too old a criminal to be caught in that way, and he left the city with great despatch.

The people along the coast of North Carolina

became very tired of Blackbeard and his men. All sorts of depredations were committed on vessels, large and small, and whenever a ship was boarded and robbed, or whenever a fishing-vessel was laid under contribution, Blackbeard was known to be at the bottom of the business, whether he personally appeared or not. To have this busy pirate for a neighbor was extremely unpleasant, and the North Carolina settlers greatly longed to get rid of him. It was of no use for them to ask their own State Government to suppress this outrageous scoundrel, and although their good neighbor, South Carolina, might have been willing to help them, she was too poor at that time and had enough to do to take care of herself.

Not knowing, or not caring for the strong feeling of the settlers against him, Blackbeard continued in his wicked ways, and among other crimes he captured a small vessel and treated the crew in such a cruel and atrocious manner that the better class of North Carolinians vowed they would stand him no longer, and they therefore applied to Governor Spotswood, of Virginia, and asked his aid in putting down the pirates. The Virginians were

very willing to do what they could for their unfortunate neighbors. The legislature offered a reward for the capture of Blackbeard or any of his men ; but the Governor, feeling that this was not enough, determined to do something on his own responsibility, for he knew very well that the time might come when the pirate vessels would begin to haunt Virginia waters.

There happened to be at that time two small British men-of-war in Hampton Roads, but since the Governor had no authority to send these after the pirates, he fitted out two sloops at his own expense and manned them with the best fighting men from the war-vessels. One of the sloops he put under Captain Brand, and the other under Captain Maynard, both brave and experienced naval officers. All preparations were made with the greatest secrecy — for if Blackbeard had heard of what was going on, he would probably have decamped — and then the two sloops went out to sea with a commission from the Governor to capture Blackbeard, dead or alive. This was a pretty heavy contract, but Brand and Maynard were courageous men and did not hesitate to take it.

The Virginians had been informed that the pirate captain and his men were on a vessel in Ocracoke Inlet, and when they arrived, they found, to their delight, that Blackbeard was there. When the pirates saw the two armed vessels sailing into the inlet, they knew very well that they were about to be attacked, and it did not take them long to get ready for a fight, nor did they wait to see what their enemy was about to do. As soon as the sloops were near enough, Blackbeard, without waiting for any preliminary exercises, such as a demand for surrender or any nonsense of that sort, let drive at the intruders with eight heavily loaded cannon.

Now the curtain had been rung up, and the play began, and a very lively play it was. The guns of the Virginians blazed away at the pirate ship, and they would have sent out boats to board her had not Blackbeard forestalled them. Boarding was always a favorite method of fighting with the pirates. They did not often carry heavy cannon, and even when they did, they had but little fancy for battles at long distances. What they liked was to meet foes face to face and cut them down on

their own decks. In such combats they felt at home, and were almost always successful, for there were few mariners or sailors, even in the British navy, who could stand against these brawny, glaring-eyed dare-devils, who sprang over the sides of a vessel like panthers, and fought like bulldogs. Blackbeard had had enough cannonading, and he did not wait to be boarded. Springing into a boat with about twenty of his men, he rowed to the vessel commanded by Maynard, and in a few minutes he and his pirates surged on board her.

Now there followed on the decks of that sloop one of the most fearful hand-to-hand combats known to naval history. Pirates had often attacked vessels where they met with strong resistance, but never had a gang of sea-robbers fallen in with such bold and skilled antagonists as those who now confronted Blackbeard and his crew. At it they went, — cut, fire, slash, bang, howl, and shout. Steel clashed, pistols blazed, smoke went up, and blood ran down, and it was hard in the confusion for a man to tell friend from foe. Blackbeard was everywhere, bounding from

side to side, as he swung his cutlass high and low, and though many a shot was fired at him, and many a rush made in his direction, every now and then a sailor went down beneath his whirling blade.

But the great pirate had not boarded that ship to fight with common men. He was looking for Maynard, the commander. Soon he met him, and for the first time in his life he found his match. Maynard was a practised swordsman, and no matter how hard and how swiftly came down the cutlass of the pirate, his strokes were always evaded, and the sword of the Virginian played more dangerously near him. At last Blackbeard, finding that he could not cut down his enemy, suddenly drew a pistol, and was about to empty its barrels into the very face of his opponent, when Maynard sent his sword-blade into the throat of the furious pirate; the great Blackbeard went down upon his back on the deck, and in the next moment Maynard put an end to his nefarious<sup>1</sup> career. Their leader dead, the few pirates who were left alive gave up the fight, and sprang overboard, hoping

<sup>1</sup> Nefarious, very bad.



to be able to swim ashore, and the victory of the Virginians was complete.

The strength, toughness, and extraordinary vitality of these feline human beings, who were known as pirates, has often occasioned astonishment in ordinary people. Their sun-tanned and hairy bodies seemed to be made of something like wire, leather, and India rubber, upon which the most tremendous exertions, and even the infliction of severe wounds, made but little impression. Before Blackbeard fell, he received from Maynard and others no less than twenty-five wounds, and yet he fought fearlessly to the last, and when the panting officer sheathed his sword, he felt that he had performed a most signal deed of valor.

When they had broken up the pirate nest in Ocracoke Inlet, the two sloops sailed to Bath, where they compelled some of the unscrupulous town officials to surrender the cargo which had been stolen from the French vessel and stored in the town by Blackbeard; then they sailed proudly back to Hampton Roads, with the head of the dreaded Blackbeard dangling from the end

of the bowsprit of the vessel he had boarded, and on whose deck he had discovered the fact, before unknown to him, that a well-trained, honest man can fight as well as the most reckless cutthroat who ever decked his beard with ribbons, and swore enmity to all things good.

## CHAPTER XIII

### A GREENHORN UNDER THE BLACK FLAG

**E**ARLY in the eighteenth century there lived at Bridgetown, in the island of Barbadoes,<sup>1</sup> a very pleasant, middle-aged gentleman named Major Stede Bonnet. He was a man in comfortable circumstances, and had been an officer in the British army. He had retired from military service, and had bought an estate at Bridgetown, where he lived in comfort and was respected by his neighbors.

But for some reason or other this quiet and reputable gentleman got it into his head that he would like to be a pirate. There were some persons who said that this strange fancy was due to the fact that his wife did not make his home pleasant for him, but it is quite certain that if a man wants an excuse for robbing and murdering his fellow-beings, he ought to have a much better one than the bad temper of his wife. But besides the general rea-

<sup>1</sup> Barbadoes. See map.

sons why Major Bonnet should not become a pirate, and which applied to all men as well as himself, there was a special reason against his adoption of the profession of a sea-robber, for he was an out-and-out landsman and knew nothing whatever of nautical matters. He had been at sea but very little, and if he had heard a boatswain order his man to furl the keel, to batten down the shrouds, or to hoist the forechains to the topmast yard, he would have seen nothing out of the way in these commands. He was very fond of history, and very well read in the literature of the day. He was accustomed to the habits of good society, and knew a great deal about farming and horses, cows and poultry, but if he had been compelled to steer a vessel, he would not have known how to keep her bow ahead of her stern.

But notwithstanding this absolute incapacity for such a life, and the absence of any of the ordinary motives for abandoning respectability and entering upon a career of crime, Major Bonnet was determined to become a pirate, and he became one. He had money enough to buy a ship and to fit her out and man her, and this he quietly did at Bridge-

town, nobody supposing that he was going to do anything more than start off on some commercial cruise. When everything was ready, his vessel slipped out of the harbor one night, and after he was sailing safely on the rolling sea he stood upon the quarterdeck and proclaimed himself a pirate. It might not be supposed that this was necessary, for the seventy men on board his ship were all desperate cutthroats, of various nationalities, whom he had found in the little port, and who knew very well what was expected of them when they reached the sea. But if Stede Bonnet had not proclaimed himself a pirate, it is possible that he might not have believed, himself, that he was one, and so he ran up the black flag, with its skeleton or skull and cross-bones, he girded on a great cutlass, and, folding his arms, he ordered his mate to steer the vessel to the coast of Virginia.

Although Bonnet knew so little about ships and the sea, and had had no experience in piracy, his men were practised seamen, and those of them who had not been pirates before were quite ready and very well fitted to become such; so when this green hand came into the waters of Virginia, he

actually took two or three vessels and robbed them of their cargoes, burning the ships, and sending the crews on shore.

This had grown to be a common custom among the pirates, who, though cruel and hard-hearted, had not the inducements of the old buccaneers to torture and murder the crews of the vessels which they captured. They could not hate human beings in general as the buccaneers hated the Spaniards, and so they were a little more humane to their prisoners, setting them ashore on some island or desert coast, and letting them shift for themselves as best they might. This was called marooning, and was somewhat less heartless than the old methods of getting rid of undesirable prisoners by drowning or beheading them.

As Bonnet had always been rather conventional in his ideas and had respected the customs of the society in which he found himself, he now adopted all the piratical fashions of the day, and when he found himself too far from land to put the captured crew on shore, he did not hesitate to make them "walk the plank," which was a favorite device of the pirates whenever they had no other

way of disposing of their prisoners. The unfortunate wretches, with their hands tied behind them, were compelled, one by one, to mount a plank which was projected over the side of the vessel and balanced like a see-saw, and when, prodded by knives and cutlasses, they stepped out upon this plank, of course it tipped up, and down they went into the sea. In this way, men, women, and children slipped out of sight among the waves as the vessel sailed merrily on.

In one branch of his new profession Bonnet rapidly became proficient. He was an insatiable<sup>1</sup> robber and a cruel conqueror. He captured merchant vessels all along the coast as high up as New England, and then he came down again and stopped for a while before Charles Town harbor, where he took a couple of prizes, and then put into one of the North Carolina harbors, where it was always easy for a pirate vessel to refit and get ready for further adventures.

Bonnet's vessel was named the *Revenge*, which was about as ill suited to the vessel as her commander was ill fitted to sail her, for Bonnet had

<sup>1</sup> Insatiable, not to be satisfied, very greedy.



nobody to revenge himself upon unless, indeed, it were his scolding wife. But a good many pirate ships were then called the *Revenge*, and Bonnet was bound to follow the fashion, whatever it might be.

Very soon after he had stood upon the quarter-deck and proclaimed himself a pirate his men had discovered that he knew no more about sailing than he knew about painting portraits, and although there were under-officers who directed all the nautical operations, the mass of the crew conceived a great contempt for a landsman captain. There was much grumbling and growling, and many of the men would have been glad to throw Bonnet overboard and take the ship into their own hands. But when any symptoms of mutiny showed themselves, the pirates found that although they did not have a sailor in command over them, they had a very determined and relentless master. Bonnet knew that the captain of a pirate ship ought to be the most severe and rigid man on board, and so, at the slightest sign of insubordination, his grumbling men were put in chains or flogged, and it was Bonnet's habit at such times to strut about the deck with loaded pistols,



“BLACKBEARD TOLD BONNET THAT HE WAS NOT FIT TO BE A PIRATE CAPTAIN AND THAT HE WOULD SEND SOMEBODY TO TAKE CHARGE OF THE *Revenge*.”

threatening to blow out the brains of any man who dared to disobey him. Recognizing that although their captain was no sailor he was a first-class tyrant, the rebellious crew kept their grumbling to themselves and worked his ship.

Bonnet now pointed the bow of the *Revenge* southward — that is, he requested somebody else to see that it was done — and sailed to the Bay of Honduras, which was a favorite resort of the pirates about that time. And here it was that he first met with the famous Captain Blackbeard. There can be no doubt that our amateur pirate was very glad indeed to become acquainted with this well-known professional, and they soon became good friends. Blackbeard was on the point of organizing an expedition, and he proposed that Bonnet and his vessel should join it. This invitation was gladly accepted, and the two pirate captains started out on a cruise together. Now the old reprobate,<sup>1</sup> Blackbeard, knew everything about ships and was a good navigator, and it was not long before he discovered that his new partner was as green as grass in regard to all nautical af-

<sup>1</sup> Reprobate, thoroughly bad person.

fairs. Consequently, after having thought the matter over for a time, he made up his mind that Bonnet was not at all fit to command such a fine vessel as the one he owned and had fitted out, and as pirates make their own laws, and perhaps do not obey them if they happen not to feel like it, Blackbeard sent for Bonnet to come on board his ship, and then, in a manner as cold-blooded as if he had been about to cut down a helpless prisoner, Blackbeard told Bonnet that he was not fit to be a pirate captain, that he intended to keep him on board his own vessel, and that he would send somebody to take charge of the *Revenge*.

This was a fall indeed, and Bonnet was almost stunned by it. An hour before he had been proudly strutting about on the deck of a vessel which belonged to him, and in which he had captured many valuable prizes, and now he was told he was to stay on Blackbeard's ship and make himself useful in keeping the log book, or in doing any other easy thing which he might happen to understand. The green pirate ground his teeth and swore bitterly inside of himself, but he said nothing openly; on Blackbeard's ship Blackbeard's decisions were not to be questioned.

## CHAPTER XIV

### BONNET AGAIN TO THE FRONT

**I**T must not be supposed that the late commander of the *Revenge* continued to be satisfied, as he sat in the cabin of Blackbeard's vessel and made the entries of the day's sailing and various performances. He obeyed the orders of his usurping partner because he was obliged to do so, but he did not hate Blackbeard any the less because he had to keep quiet about it. He accompanied his pirate chief on various cruises, among which was the famous expedition to the harbor of Charles Town where Blackbeard traded Mr. Wragg and his companions for medicines.

Having a very fine fleet under him, Blackbeard did a very successful business for some time, but feeling that he had earned enough for the present, and that it was time for him to take one of his vacations, he put into an inlet in North Carolina, where he disbanded his crew. So long as he was on

shore spending his money and having a good time, he did not want to have a lot of men about him who would look to him to support them when they had spent their portion of the spoils. Having no further use for Bonnet, he dismissed him also, and did not object to his resuming possession of his own vessel. If the green pirate chose to go to sea again and perhaps drown himself and his crew, it was a matter of no concern to Blackbeard.

But this was a matter of very great concern to Stede Bonnet, and he proceeded to prove that there were certain branches of the piratical business in which he was an adept, and second to none of his fellow-practitioners. He wished to go pirating again, and saw a way of doing this which he thought would be far superior to any of the common methods. It was about this time that King George of England, very desirous of breaking up piracy, issued a proclamation in which he promised pardon to any pirate who would appear before the proper authorities, renounce his evil practices, and take an oath of allegiance. It also happened that very soon after this proclamation had been issued, England went



to war with Spain. Being a man who kept himself posted in the news of the world, so far as it was possible, Bonnet saw in the present state of affairs a very good chance for him to play the part of a wolf in sheep's clothing, and he proceeded to begin his new piratical career by renouncing piracy. So leaving the *Revenge* in the inlet, he journeyed overland to Bath; there he signed pledges, took oaths, and did everything that was necessary to change himself from a pirate captain to a respectable commander of a duly authorized British privateer. Returning to his vessel with all the papers in his pocket necessary to prove that he was a loyal and law-abiding subject of Great Britain, he took out regular clearance papers for St. Thomas, which was a British naval station, and where he declared he was going in order to obtain a commission as a privateer.

Now the wily Bonnet had everything he wanted except a crew. Of course it would not do for him, in his present respectable capacity, to go about enlisting unemployed pirates, but at this point fortune again favored him; he knew of a desert island not very far away where Blackbeard,



at the end of his last cruise, had marooned a large party of his men. This heartless pirate had not wanted to take all of his followers into port, because they might prove troublesome and expensive to him, and so he had put a number of them on this island, to live or die as the case might be. Bonnet went over to this island, and finding the greater part of these men still surviving, he offered to take them to St. Thomas in his vessel if they would agree to work the ship to port. This proposition was of course joyfully accepted, and very soon the *Revenge* was manned with a complete crew of competent desperadoes.

All these operations took a good deal of time, and, at last, when everything was ready for Bonnet to start out on his piratical cruise, he received information which caused him to change his mind, and to set forth on an errand of a very different kind. He had supposed that Blackbeard, whom he had never forgiven for the shameful and treacherous manner in which he had treated him, was still on shore enjoying himself, but he was told by the captain of a small trading vessel that the old pirate was preparing for another cruise,

and that he was then in Ocracoke Inlet. Now Bonnet folded his arms and stamped his feet upon the quarter-deck. The time had come for him to show that the name of his vessel meant something. Never before had he had an opportunity for revenging himself on anybody, but now that hour had arrived. He would revenge himself upon Blackbeard !

The implacable Bonnet sailed out to sea in a truly warlike frame of mind. He was not going forth to prey upon unresisting merchantmen ; he was on his way to punish a black-hearted pirate, a faithless scoundrel, who had not only acted knavishly toward the world in general, but had behaved most disloyally and disrespectfully toward a fellow pirate chief. If he could once run the *Revenge* alongside the ship of the perfidious Blackbeard, he would show him what a green hand could do.

When Bonnet reached Ocracoke Inlet, he was deeply disappointed to find that Blackbeard had left that harbor, but he did not give up the pursuit. He made hot chase after the vessel of his pirate enemy, keeping a sharp lookout in hopes

of discovering some signs of him. If the enraged Bonnet could have met the ferocious Blackbeard face to face, there might have been a combat which would have relieved the world of two atrocious<sup>1</sup> villains, and Captain Maynard would have been deprived of the honor of having slain the most famous pirate of the day.

Bonnet was a good soldier and a brave man, and, although he could not sail a ship, he understood the use of the sword even better, perhaps, than Blackbeard, and there is good reason to believe that if the two ships had come together, their respective crews would have allowed their captains to fight out their private quarrel without interference, for pirates delight in a bloody spectacle, and this would have been to them a rare diversion of the kind.

But Bonnet never overtook Blackbeard, and the great combat between the rival pirates did not take place. After vainly searching for a considerable time for a trace or sight of Blackbeard, the baffled Bonnet gave up the pursuit and turned his mind to other objects. The first thing he did was

<sup>1</sup> Atrocious, terribly wicked.

to change the name of his vessel; if he could not be revenged, he would not sail in the *Revenge*. Casting about in his mind for a good name, he decided to call her the *Royal James*. Having no intention of respecting his oaths or of keeping his promises, he thought that, as he was going to be disloyal, he might as well be as disloyal as he could, and so he gave his ship the name assumed by the son of James the Second, who was a pretender to the throne, and was then in France plotting against the English government.

The next thing he did was to change his own name, for he thought this would make matters better for him if he should be captured after entering upon his new criminal career. So he called himself Captain Thomas, by which name he was afterwards known.

When these preliminaries had been arranged, he gathered his crew together and announced that instead of going to St. Thomas to get a commission as a privateer, he had determined to keep on in his old manner of life, and that he wished them to understand that not only was he a pirate captain, but that they were a pirate crew. Many of the

men were very much surprised at this announcement, for they had thought it a very natural thing for the green-hand Bonnet to give up pirating after he had been so thoroughly snubbed by Blackbeard, and they had not supposed that he would ever think again of sailing under a black flag.

However, the crew's opinion of the green-hand captain had been a good deal changed. In his various cruises he had learned a good deal about navigation, and could now give very fair orders, and his furious pursuit of Blackbeard had also given him a reputation for reckless bravery which he had not enjoyed before. A man who was chafing and fuming for a chance of a hand-to-hand conflict with the greatest pirate of the day must be a pretty good sort of a fellow from their point of view. Moreover, their strutting and stalking captain, so recently balked of his dark revenge, was a very savage-looking man, and it would not be pleasant either to try to persuade him to give up his piratical intention, or to decline to join him in carrying it out; so the whole of the crew, minor officers and men, changed their minds

about going to St. Thomas, and agreed to hoist the skull and cross bones, and to follow Captain Bonnet wherever he might lead.

Bonnet now cruised about in grand style and took some prizes on the Virginia coast, and then went up into Delaware Bay, where he captured such ships as he wanted, and acted generally in the most domineering and insolent fashion. Once, when he stopped near the town of Lewes, in order to send some prisoners ashore, he sent a message to the officers of the town to the effect that if they interfered with his men when they came ashore, he would open fire upon the town with his cannon, and blow every house into splinters. Of course the citizens, having no way of defending themselves, were obliged to allow the pirates to come on shore and depart unmolested.

Then after this the blustering captain captured two valuable sloops, and wishing to take them along with him without the trouble of transferring their cargoes to his own vessel, he left their crews on board, and ordered them to follow him wherever he went. Some days after that, when one of the vessels seemed to be sailing at too great a

distance, Bonnet quickly let her captain know that he was not a man to be trifled with, and sent him the message that if he did not keep close to the *Royal James*, he would fire into him and sink him to the bottom.

After a time Bonnet put into a North Carolina port in order to repair the *Royal James*, which was becoming very leaky, and seeing no immediate legitimate way of getting planks and beams enough with which to make the necessary repairs, he captured a small sloop belonging in the neighborhood, and broke it up in order to get the material he needed to make his own vessel seaworthy.

Now the people of the North Carolina coast very seldom interfered with pirates, as we have seen, and it is likely that Bonnet might have stayed in port as long as he pleased, and repaired and refitted his vessel without molestation if he had bought and paid for the planks and timber he required. But when it came to boldly seizing their property, that was too much even for the people of the region, and complaints of Bonnet's behavior spread from settlement to settlement,



and it very soon became known all down the coast that there was a pirate in North Carolina who was committing depredations there and was preparing to set out on a fresh cruise.

When these tidings came to Charles Town, the citizens were thrown into great agitation. It had not been long since Blackbeard had visited their harbor, and had treated them with such brutal insolence, and there were bold spirits in the town who declared that if any effort by them could prevent another visitation of the pirates, that effort should be made. There was no naval force in the harbor which could be sent out to meet the pirates, who were coming down the coast; but Mr. William Rhett, a private gentleman of position in the place, went to the Governor and offered to fit out, at his own expense, an expedition for the purpose of turning away from their city the danger which threatened it.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE BATTLE OF THE SAND-BARS

WHEN that estimable private gentleman, Mr. William Rhett, of Charles Town, had received a commission from the Governor to go forth on his own responsibility and meet the dreaded pirate, the news of whose depredations had thrown the good citizens into such a fever of apprehension, he took possession, in the name of the law, of two large sloops, the *Henry* and the *Sea-Nymph*, which were in the harbor, and at his own expense he manned them with well-armed crews, and put on board of each of them eight small cannon. When everything was ready, Mr. Rhett was in command of a very formidable force for those waters, and if he had been ready to sail a few days sooner, he would have had an opportunity of giving his men some practice in fighting pirates before they met the particular and more important sea-robber whom

they had set out to encounter. Just as his vessel was ready to sail, Mr. Rhett received news that a pirate ship had captured two or three merchantmen just outside the harbor, and he put out to sea with all possible haste and cruised up and down the coast for some time, but he did not find this most recent 'depredator,'<sup>1</sup> who had departed very promptly when he heard that armed ships were coming out of the harbor.

Now Mr. Rhett, who was no more of a sailor than Stede Bonnet had been when he first began his seafaring life, boldly made his way up the coast to the mouth of Cape Fear River where he had been told the pirate vessel was lying. When he reached his destination, Mr. Rhett found that it would not be an easy thing to ascend the river, for the reason that the pilots he had brought with him knew nothing about the waters of that part of the coast, and although the two ships made their way very cautiously, it was not long after they had entered the river before they got out of the channel, and it being low tide, both of them ran aground upon sand bars.

<sup>1</sup> Depredator, robber.

This was a very annoying accident, but it was not disastrous, for the sailing masters who commanded the sloops knew very well that when the tide rose, their vessels would float again. But it prevented Mr. Rhett from going on and making an immediate attack upon the pirate vessel, the topmasts of which could be plainly seen behind a high headland some distance up the river.

Of course Bonnet, or Captain Thomas, as he now chose to be called, soon became aware of the fact that two good-sized vessels were lying aground near the mouth of the river, and having a very natural curiosity to see what sort of craft they were, he waited until nightfall and then sent three armed boats to make observations. When these boats returned to the *Royal James* and reported that the grounded vessels were not well-loaded trading craft, but large sloops full of men and armed with cannon, Bonnet (for we prefer to call him by his old name) had good reason to fold his arms, knit his brows, and strut up and down the deck. He was sure that the armed vessels came from Charles Town, and there was no reason to doubt that if the Governor of South

Carolina had sent two ships against him the matter was a very serious one. He was penned up in the river, he had only one fighting vessel to contend against two, and if he could not succeed in getting out to sea before he should be attacked by the Charles Town ships, there would be but little chance of his continuing in his present line of business. If the *Royal James* had been ready to sail, there is no doubt that Bonnet would have taken his chance of finding the channel in the dark, and would have sailed away that night without regard to the cannonading which might have been directed against him from the two stranded vessels.

But as it was impossible to get ready to sail, Bonnet went to work with the greatest energy to get ready to fight. He knew that when the tide rose there would be two armed sloops afloat, and that there would be a regular naval battle on the quiet waters of Cape Fear River. All night his men worked to clear the decks and get everything in order for the coming combat, and all night Mr. Rhett and his crew kept a sharp watch for any unexpected move of the enemy, while they loaded

their guns, their pistols, and their cannon, and put everything in order for action.

Very early in the morning the wide-awake crews of the South Carolina vessels, which were now afloat and at anchor, saw that the topmasts of the pirate craft were beginning to move above the distant headland, and very soon Bonnet's ship came out into view, under full sail, and as she veered around they saw that she was coming toward them. Up went the anchors and up went the sails of the *Henry* and the *Sea-Nymph*, and the naval battle between the retired army officer who had almost learned to be a sailor, and the private gentleman from South Carolina, who knew nothing whatever about managing ships, was about to begin.

It was plain to the South Carolinians that the great object of the pirate captain was to get out to sea just as soon as he could, and that he was coming down the river, not because he wished to make an immediate attack upon them, but because he hoped to slip by them and get away. Of course they could follow him upon the ocean and fight him if their vessels were fast enough, but

once out of the river with plenty of sea-room, he would have twenty chances of escape where now he had one.

But Mr. Rhett did not intend that the pirates should play him this little trick; he wanted to fight the dastardly wretches in the river, where they could not get away, and he had no idea of letting them sneak out to sea. Consequently as the *Royal James*, under full sail, was making her way down the river, keeping as far as possible from her two enemies, Mr. Rhett ordered his ships to bear down upon her so as to cut off her retreat and force her toward the opposite shore of the river. This manœuvre was performed with great success. The two Charles Town sloops sailed so boldly and swiftly toward the *Royal James* that the latter was obliged to hug the shore, and the first thing the pirates knew they were stuck fast and tight upon a sand-bar. Three minutes afterward the *Henry* ran upon a sand-bar, and there being enough of these obstructions in that river to satisfy any ordinary demand, the *Sea-Nymph* very soon grounded herself upon another of them. But unfortunately she took up her permanent



position at a considerable distance from her consort.

Here now were the vessels which were to conduct this memorable sea-fight, all three fast in the sand and unable to move, and their predicament was made the worse by the fact that it would be five hours before the tide would rise high enough for any one of them to float. The positions of the three vessels were very peculiar and awkward; the *Henry* and the *Royal James* were lying so near to each other that Mr. Rhett could have shot Major Bonnet with a pistol if the latter gentleman had given him the chance, and the *Sea-Nymph* was so far away that she was entirely out of the fight, and her crew could do nothing but stand and watch what was going on between the other two vessels.

But although they could not get any nearer each other, nor get away from each other, the pirates and Mr. Rhett's crew had no idea of postponing the battle until they should be afloat and able to fight in the ordinary fashion of ships; they immediately began to fire at each other with pistols, muskets, and cannon, and the din and roar was

something that must have astonished the birds and beasts and fishes of that quiet region.

As the tide continued to run out of the river, and its waters became more and more shallow, the two contending vessels began to careen <sup>1</sup> over to one side, and, unfortunately for the *Henry*, they both careened in the same direction, and in such a manner that the deck of the *Royal James* was inclined away from the *Henry*, while the deck of the latter leaned towards her pirate foe. This gave a great advantage to Bonnet and his crew, for they were in a great measure protected by the hull of their vessel, whereas the whole deck of the *Henry* was exposed to the fire of the pirates. But Mr. Rhett and his South Carolinians were all brave men, and they blazed away with their muskets and pistols at the pirates whenever they could see a head above the rail of the *Royal James*, while with their cannon they kept firing at the pirate's hull.

For five long hours the fight continued, but the cannon carried by the two vessels must have been of very small calibre, for if they had been firing

<sup>1</sup> Careen, to tip.

at such short range and for such a length of time with modern guns, they must have shattered each other into kindling wood. But neither vessel seems to have been seriously injured, and although there were a good many men killed on both sides, the combat was kept up with great determination and fury. At one time it seemed almost certain that Bonnet would get the better of Mr. Rhett, and he ordered his black flag waved contemptuously in the air while his men shouted to the South Carolinians to come over and call upon them, but the South Carolina boys answered these taunts with cheers and fired away more furiously than ever.

The tide was now coming in, and everybody on board the two fighting vessels knew very well that the first one of them which should float would have a great advantage over the other, and would probably be the conqueror. In came the tide, and still the cannons roared and the muskets cracked, while the hearts of the pirates and the South Carolinians almost stood still as they each watched the other vessel to see if she showed any signs of floating.

At last such signs were seen; the *Henry* was further from the shore than the *Royal James*, and she first felt the influence of the rising waters. Her masts began to straighten, and at last her deck was level, and she floated clear of the bottom while her antagonist still lay careened over on her side. Now the pirates saw there was no chance for them; in a very short time the other Carolina sloop would be afloat, and then the two vessels would bear down upon them and utterly destroy them and their vessel. Consequently upon the *Royal James* there was a general disposition to surrender and to make the best terms they could, for it would be a great deal better to submit and run the chance of a trial than to keep up the fight against enemies so much superior both in numbers and ships, who would soon be upon them.

But Bonnet would not listen to one word of surrender. Rather than give up the fight he declared he would set fire to the powder magazine of the *Royal James* and blow himself, his ship, and his men high up into the air. Although he had not a sailor's skill, he possessed a soldier's soul, and in spite of his being a dastardly and

cruel pirate he was a brave man. But Bonnet was only one, and his crew numbered dozens, and notwithstanding his furiously dissenting voice it was determined to surrender, and when Mr. Rhett sailed up to the *Royal James*, intending to board her if the pirates still showed resistance, he found them ready to submit to terms and to yield themselves his prisoners.

Thus ended the great sea-fight between the private gentlemen, and thus ended Stede Bonnet's career. He and his men were taken to Charles Town, where most of the pirate crew were tried and executed. The green-hand pirate, who had wrought more devastation along the American coast than many a skilled sea-robber, was held in custody to await his trial, and it seems very strange that there should have been a public sentiment in Charles Town which induced the officials to treat this pirate with a certain degree of respect simply from the fact that his station in life had been that of a gentleman. He was a much more black-hearted scoundrel than any of his men, but they were executed as soon as possible, while his trial was postponed and he was allowed

privileges which would never have been accorded a common pirate. In consequence of this leniency he escaped and had to be retaken by Mr. Rhett. It was so long before he was tried that sympathy for his misfortunes arose among some of the tender-hearted citizens of Charles Town whose houses he would have pillaged and whose families he would have murdered if the exigencies of piracy had rendered such action desirable.

Finding that other people were trying to save his life, Bonnet came down from his high horse and tried to save it himself by writing piteous letters to the Governor, begging for mercy. But the Governor of South Carolina had no notion of sparing a pirate who had deliberately put himself under the protection of the law in order that he might better pursue his lawless and wicked career, and the green hand, with the black heart, was finally hung on the same spot where his companions had been executed.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE STORY OF TWO WOMEN PIRATES

**T**HE history of the world gives us many instances of women who have taken the parts of men, almost always acquitting themselves with as much credit as if they had really belonged to the male sex, and, in our modern days, these instances are becoming more frequent than ever before. Joan of Arc put on a suit of armor and bravely led an army, and there have been many other fighting women who made a reputation for themselves; but it is very seldom that we hear of a woman who became a pirate. There were, however, two women pirates who made themselves very well known on our coast.

The most famous of these women pirates was named Mary Reed. Her father was an English captain of a trading vessel, and her mother sailed with him. This mother had had an elder child, a son, and she also had a mother-in-law in England



from whom she expected great things for her little boy. But the boy died, and Mrs. Reed, being afraid that her mother-in-law would not be willing to leave any property to a girl, determined to play a little trick, and make believe that her second child was also a boy.

Consequently, as soon as the little girl, who, from her birth had been called Mary by her father and mother, was old enough to leave off baby clothes, she put on boy's clothes, and when the family returned to England a nice little boy appeared before his grandmother; but all this deception amounted to nothing, for the old lady died without leaving anything to the pretended boy. Mary's mother believed that her child would get along better in the world as a boy than she would as a girl, and therefore she still dressed her in masculine clothes, and put her out to service as a foot-boy, or one of those youngsters who now go by the name of "Buttons."

But Mary did not fancy blacking boots and running errands. She was very well satisfied to be a boy, but she wanted to live the kind of a boy's life which would please her fancy, and as she

thought life on the ocean wave would suit her very well, she ran away from her employer's house and enlisted on board a man-of-war as a powder monkey.

After a short time, Mary found that the ocean was not all that she expected it to be, and when she had grown up so that she looked like a good strapping fellow, she ran away from the man-of-war when it was in an English port, and went to Flanders, and there she thought she would try something new, and see whether or not she would like a soldier's life better than that of a sailor. She enlisted in a regiment of foot and in the course of time she became a very good soldier and took part in several battles, firing her musket and charging with her bayonet as well as any of the men beside her.

But there is a great deal of hard work connected with infantry service, and although she was eager for the excitement of battle with the exhilarating smell of powder and the cheering shouts of her fellow-soldiers, Mary did not fancy tramping on long marches, carrying her heavy musket and knapsack. She got herself changed into a regi-

ment of cavalry, and here, mounted upon a horse, with the encumbrances she disliked to carry comfortably strapped behind her, Mary felt much more at ease, and much better satisfied. But she was not destined to achieve fame as a dash-ing cavalry man with foaming steed and flashing sabre. One of her comrades was a very pre-possessing young fellow, and Mary fell in love with him, and when she told him she was not really a cavalry man but a cavalry woman, he returned her affection, and the two agreed that they would quit the army, and set up domestic life as quiet civilians. They were married, and went into the tavern-keeping business. They were both fond of horses, and did not wish to sever all connection with the method of life they had just given up, and so they called their little inn the Three Horse Shoes, and were always glad when any one of their customers came riding up to their stables, instead of simply walking in their door.

But this domestic life did not last very long. Mary's husband died, and, not wishing to keep a tavern by herself, she again put on the dress of a

man and enlisted as a soldier. But her military experience did not satisfy her, and after all she believed that she liked the sea better than the land, and again she shipped as a sailor on a vessel bound for the West Indies.

Now Mary's desire for change and variety seemed likely to be fully satisfied. The ship was taken by English pirates, and as she was English and looked as if she would make a good freebooter, they compelled her to join them, and thus it was that she got her first idea of a pirate's life. When this company disbanded, she went to New Providence and enlisted on a privateer, but, as was very common on such vessels commissioned to perform acts of legal piracy, the crew soon determined that illegal piracy was much preferable, so they hoisted the black flag, and began to scourge the seas.

Mary Reed was now a regular pirate, with a cutlass, pistol, and every outward appearance of a daring sea-robber, except that she wore no bristling beard, but as her face was sunburned and seamed by the weather, she looked mannish enough to frighten the senses out of any unfortunate trader on whose deck she bounded in company with her

shouting, hairy-faced companions. It is told of her that she did not fancy the life of a pirate, but she seemed to believe in the principle of whatever is worth doing is worth doing well ; she was as ready with her cutlass and her pistol as any other ocean bandit.

But although Mary was a daring pirate, she was also a woman, and again she fell in love. A very pleasant and agreeable sailor was taken prisoner by the crew of her ship, and Mary concluded that she would take him as her portion of the spoils. Consequently, at the first port they touched she became again a woman and married him, and as they had no other present method of livelihood he remained with her on her ship. Mary and her husband had no real love for a pirate's life, and they determined to give it up as soon as possible, but the chance to do so did not arrive. Mary had a very high regard for her new husband, who was a quiet, amiable man, and not at all suited to his present life, and as he had become a pirate for the love of her, she did everything she could to make life easy for him.

She even went so far as to fight a duel in his place, one of the crew having insulted him, prob-

ably thinking him a milksop who would not resent an affront. But the latent courage of Mary's husband instantly blazed up, and he challenged the insulter to a duel. Although Mary thought her husband was brave enough to fight anybody, she thought that perhaps, in some ways, he was a milksop and did not understand the use of arms nearly as well as she did. Therefore, she made him stay on board the ship while she went to a little island near where they were anchored and fought the duel with sword and pistol. The man pirate and the woman pirate now went savagely to work, and it was not long before the man pirate lay dead upon the sand, while Mary returned to an admiring crew and a grateful husband.

During her piratical career Mary fell in with another woman pirate, Anne Bonny, by name, and these women, being perhaps the only two of their kind, became close friends. Anne came of a good family. She was the daughter of an Irish lawyer, who went to Carolina and became a planter, and there the little girl grew up. When her mother died she kept the house, but her disposition was very much more masculine than feminine. She

was very quick-tempered and easily enraged, and it is told of her that when an Englishwoman, who was working as a servant in her father's house, had irritated Anne by some carelessness or impertinence, that hot-tempered young woman sprang upon her and stabbed her with a carving-knife.

It is not surprising that Anne soon showed a dislike for the humdrum life on a plantation, and meeting with a young sailor, who owned nothing in the world but the becoming clothes he wore, she married him. Thereupon her father, who seems to have been as hot-headed as his daughter, promptly turned her out of doors. The fiery Anne was glad enough to adopt her husband's life, and she went to sea with him, sailing to New Providence. There she was thrown into an entirely new circle of society. Pirates were in the habit of congregating at this place, and Anne was greatly delighted with the company of these daring, dashing sea-robbers, of whose exploits she had so often heard. The more she associated with the pirates, the less she cared for the plain, stupid sailors, who were content with the merchant service, and she finally deserted her husband and married a



Captain Rackham, one of the most attractive and dashing pirates of the day.

Anne went on board the ship of her pirate husband, and as she was sure his profession would exactly suit her wild and impetuous nature, she determined also to become a pirate. She put on man's clothes, girded to her side a cutlass, and hung pistols in her belt. During many voyages Anne sailed with Captain Rackham, and wherever there was pirate's work to do, she was on deck to do it. At last the gallant captain came to grief. He was captured and condemned to death. Now there was an opportunity for Anne's nature to assert itself, and it did, but it was a very different sort of nature from that of Mary Reed. Just before his execution Anne was admitted to see her husband, but instead of offering to do anything that might comfort him or palliate his dreadful misfortune, she simply stood and contemptuously glared at him. She was sorry, she said, to see him in such a predicament, but she told him plainly that if he had had the courage to fight like a man, he would not then be waiting to be hung like a dog, and with that she walked away and left him.

On the occasion when Captain Rackham had been captured, Mary Reed and her husband were on board his ship, and there was, perhaps, some reason for Anne's denunciation of the cowardice of Captain Rackham. As has been said, the two women were good friends and great fighters, and when they found the vessel engaged in a fight with a man-of-war, they stood together upon the deck and boldly fought, although the rest of the crew, and even the captain himself, were so discouraged by the heavy fire which was brought to bear on them, that they had retreated to the hold.

Mary and Anne were so disgusted at this exhibition of cowardice, that they rushed to the hatchways and shouted to their dastardly companions to come up and help defend the ship, and when their entreaties were disregarded, they were so enraged that they fired down into the hold, killing one of the frightened pirates and wounding several others. But their ship was taken, and Mary and Anne, in company with all the pirates who had been left alive, were put in irons and carried to England.

When she was in prison, Mary declared that she and her husband had firmly intended to give up

piracy and become private citizens. But when she was put on trial, the accounts of her deeds had a great deal more effect than her words upon her judges, and she was condemned to be executed. She was saved, however, from this fate by a fever of which she died soon after her conviction.

The impetuous Anne was also condemned, but the course of justice is often very curious and difficult to understand, and this hard-hearted and sanguinary woman was reprieved and finally pardoned. Whether or not she continued to disport herself as a man we do not know, but it is certain that she was the last of the female pirates.

There are a great many things which women can do as well as men, and there are many professions and lines of work from which they have been long debarred, and for which they are most admirably adapted, but it seems to me that piracy is not one of them. It is said that a woman's nature is apt to carry her too far, and I have never heard of any man pirate who would allow himself to become so enraged against the cowardice of his companions that he would deliberately fire down into the hold of a vessel containing his wife and a crowd of his former associates.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE PIRATE OF THE BURIED TREASURE

**A**MONG all the pirates who have figured in history, legend, or song, there is one whose name stands preëminent<sup>1</sup> as the typical hero of the dreaded black flag. The name of this man will instantly rise in the mind of almost every reader, for when we speak of pirates, we always think of Captain Kidd.

In fact, however, Captain Kidd was not a typical pirate, for in many ways he was different from the ordinary marine freebooter, especially when we consider him in relation to our own country. All other pirates who made themselves notorious on our coast were known as robbers, pillagers, and ruthless destroyers of life and property, but Captain Kidd's fame was of another kind. We do not think of him as a pirate who came to carry away the property of American citizens, for nearly

<sup>1</sup> Preëminent, very prominent, before all others.

all the stories about him relate to his arrival at different points on our shores for the sole purpose of burying and concealing the rich treasures which he had collected in other parts of the world.

This novel reputation given a pirate who enriched our share by his deposits and took away none of the possessions of our people could not fail to make Captain Kidd a most interesting personage, and the result has been that he has been lifted out of the sphere of ordinary history and description into the region of imagination and legendary romance. In a word, he has been made a hero of fiction and song. It may be well, then, to assume that there are two Captain Kidds, — one the Kidd of legend and story, and the other the Kidd of actual fact, and we will consider, one at a time, the two characters in which we know the man.

As has been said before, nearly all the stories of the legendary Captain Kidd relate to his visits along our northern coast, and even to inland points, for the purpose of concealing the treasures which had been amassed in other parts of the world.

Thus if we were to find ourselves in almost any village or rural settlement along the coast of New Jersey or Long Island, and were to fall in with any old resident who was fond of talking to strangers, he would probably point out to us the blackened and weather-beaten ribs of a great ship which had been wrecked on the sand-bar off the coast during a terrible storm long ago ; he would show us where the bathing was pleasant and safe ; he would tell us of the best place for fishing, and probably show us the high bluff a little back from the beach from which the Indian maiden leaped to escape the tomahawk of her enraged lover, and then he would be almost sure to tell us of the secluded spot where it was said Captain Kidd and his pirates once buried a lot of treasure.

If we should ask our garrulous<sup>1</sup> guide why this treasure had not been dug up by the people of the place, he would probably shake his head and declare that personally he knew nothing about it, but that it was generally believed that it was there, and he had heard that there had been people who had tried to find it, but if they did find any,

<sup>1</sup> Garrulous, talkative.

they never said anything about it, and it was his opinion that if Captain Kidd ever put any gold or silver or precious stones under the ground on that part of the coast, these treasures were all there yet.

Further questioning would probably develop the fact that there was a certain superstition which prevented a great many people from interfering with the possible deposits which Captain Kidd had made in their neighborhood, and although few persons would be able to define exactly the foundation of the superstition, it was generally supposed that most of the pirates' treasures were guarded by pirate ghosts. In that case, of course, timid individuals would be deterred from going out by themselves at night, — for that was the proper time to dig for buried treasure, — and as it would not have been easy to get together a number of men each brave enough to give the others courage, many of the spots reputed to be the repositories of buried treasure have never been disturbed.

In spite of the fear of ghosts, in spite of the want of accurate knowledge in regard to favored localities, in spite of hardships, previous disap-



pointments, or expected ridicule, a great many extensive excavations have been made in the sands or the soil along the coasts of our northern states, and even in quiet woods lying miles from the sea, to which it would have been necessary for the pirates to carry their goods in wagons, people have dug and hoped and have gone away sadly to attend to more sensible business, and far up some of our rivers — where a pirate vessel never floated — people have dug with the same hopeful anxiety, and have stopped digging in the same condition of dejected disappointment.

Sometimes these enterprises were conducted on a scale which reminds us of the operations on the gold coast of California. Companies were organized, stock was issued and subscribed for, and the excavations were conducted under the direction of skilful treasure-seeking engineers.

It is said that not long ago a company was organized in Nova Scotia for the purpose of seeking for Captain Kidd's treasures in a place which it is highly probable Captain Kidd never saw. A great excavation having been made, the water from the sea came in and filled it up, but the work

was stopped only long enough to procure steam pumps with which the big hole could be drained. At last accounts the treasures had not been reached, and this incident is mentioned only to show how this belief in buried treasures continues even to the present day.

There is a legend which differs somewhat from the ordinary run of these stories, and it is told about a little island on the coast of Cape Cod, which is called Hannah Screecher's Island, and this is the way its name came to it.

Captain Kidd, while sailing along the coast, looking for a suitable place to bury some treasure, found this island adapted to his purpose, and landed there with his savage crew, and his bags and boxes, and his gold and precious stones. It was said to be the habit of these pirates, whenever they made a deposit on the coast, to make the hole big enough not only to hold the treasure they wished to deposit there, but the body of one of the crew, — who was buried with the valuables in order that his spirit might act as a day and night watchman to frighten away people who might happen to be digging in that particular spot.

The story relates that somewhere on the coast Captain Kidd had captured a young lady named Hannah, and not knowing what to do with her, and desiring not to commit an unnecessary extravagance by disposing of a useful sailor, he determined to kill Hannah, and bury her with the treasure, in order that she might keep away intruders until he came for it.

It was very natural that when Hannah was brought on shore and found out what was going to be done with her, she should screech in a most dreadful manner, and although the pirates soon silenced her and covered her up, they did not succeed in silencing her spirit, and ever since that time, — according to the stories told by some of the older inhabitants of Cape Cod, — there may be heard in the early dusk of the evening the screeches of Hannah coming across the water from her little island to the mainland.

But the ordinary Kidd stories are very much the same, and depend a good deal upon the character of the coast and upon the imagination of the people who live in that region. We will give one of them as a sample, and from this a number of very good

pirate stories could be manufactured by ingenious persons.

It was a fine summer night late in the seventeenth century. A young man named Abner Stout, in company with his wife Mary, went out for a walk upon the beach. They lived in a little village near the coast of New Jersey. Abner was a good carpenter, but a poor man; but he and his wife were very happy with each other, and as they walked toward the sea in the light of the full moon, no young lovers could have been more gay.

When they reached a little bluff covered with low shrubbery, which was the first spot from which they could have a full view of the ocean, Abner suddenly stopped, and pointed out to Mary an unusual sight. There, as plainly in view as if it had been broad daylight, was a vessel lying at the entrance of the little bay. The sails were furled, and it was apparently anchored.

For a minute Abner gazed in utter amazement at the sight of this vessel, for no ships, large or small, came to this little lonely bay. There was a harbor two or three miles farther up the coast to

which all trading craft repaired. What could the strange ship want here?

This unusual visitor to the little bay was a very low and very long, black schooner, with tall masts which raked forward, and with something which looked very much like a black flag fluttering in its rigging. Now the truth struck into the soul of Abner. "Hide yourself, Mary," he whispered. "It is a pirate ship!" And almost at the same instant the young man and his wife laid themselves flat on the ground among the bushes, but they were very careful, each of them, to take a position which would allow them to peep out through the twigs and leaves upon the scene before them.

There seemed to be a good deal of commotion on board the black schooner, and very soon a large boat pushed off from her side, and the men in it began rowing rapidly toward the shore, apparently making for a spot on the beach, not far from the bluff on which Abner and Mary were concealed. "Let us get up and run," whispered Mary, trembling from head to toe. "They are pirates, and they are coming here!"

"Lie still! Lie still!" said Abner. "If we get

up and leave these bushes, we shall be seen, 'and then they will be after us ! Lie still, and do not move a finger !' ”

The trembling Mary obeyed her husband, and they both lay quite still, scarcely breathing, with eyes wide open. The boat rapidly approached the shore. Abner counted ten men rowing and one man sitting in the stern. The boat seemed to be heavily loaded, and the oarsmen rowed hard.

Now the boat was run through the surf to the beach, and its eleven occupants jumped out. There was no mistaking their character. They were true pirates. They had great cutlasses and pistols, and one of them was very tall and broad shouldered, and wore an old-fashioned cocked hat.

“That’s Captain Kidd,” whispered Abner to his wife, and she pressed his hand to let him know that she thought he must be right.

Now the men came up high upon the beach, and began looking about here and there as if they were searching for something. Mary was filled with horror for fear they should come to that bluff to search, but Abner knew there was no danger of that. They had probably come to those shores

to bury treasure, as if they were great sea-turtles coming up upon the beach to lay their eggs, and they were now looking for some good spot where they might dig.

Presently the tall man gave some orders in a low voice, and then his men left him to himself, and went back to the boat. There was a great pine tree standing back a considerable distance from the water, battered and racked by storms, but still a tough old tree. Toward this the pirate captain stalked, and standing close to it, with his back against it, he looked up into the sky. It was plain that he was looking for a star. There were very few of these luminaries to be seen in the heavens, for the moon was so bright. But as Abner looked in the direction in which the pirate captain gazed, he saw a star still bright in spite of the moonlight.

With his eyes fixed upon this star, the pirate captain now stepped forward, making long strides. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven. Then he stopped, plunged his right heel in the soft ground, and turned squarely about to the left, so that his broad back was now parallel with a line drawn from the pine tree to the star.



At right angles to this line the pirate now stepped forward, making as before seven long paces. Then he stopped, dug his heel into the ground, and beckoned to his men. Up they came running, carrying picks and spades, and with great alacrity they began to dig at the place the captain had marked with his heel.

It was plain that these pirates were used to making excavations, for it was not long before the hole was so deep that those within it could not be seen. Then the captain gave an order to cease digging, and he and all the pirates went back to the boat.

For about half an hour, — though Mary thought it was a longer time than that, — those pirates worked very hard carrying great boxes and bags from the boat to the excavation. When everything had been brought up, two of the pirates went down into the hole, and the others handed to them the various packages. Skilfully and quickly they worked, doubtless storing their goods with great care, until nearly everything which had been brought from the boat had been placed in the deep hole. Some rolls of goods were left upon the



“TWO OF THE PIRATES WENT DOWN INTO THE HOLE.”

ground which Mary thought were carpets, but which Abner believed to be rich Persian rugs, or something of that kind.

Now the captain stepped aside, and picking up from the sand some little sticks and reeds, he selected ten of them, and with these in one hand, and with their ends protruding a short distance above his closed fingers, he rejoined his men. They gathered before him, and he held out toward them the hand which contained the little sticks.

"They're drawing lots!" gasped Abner, and Mary trembled more than she had done yet.

Now the lots were all drawn, and one man, apparently a young pirate, stepped out from among his fellows. His head was bowed, and his arms were folded across his manly chest. The captain spoke a few words, and the young pirate advanced alone to the side of the deep hole.

Mary now shut her eyes tight, tight; but Abner's were wide open. There was a sudden gleam of cutlasses in the air; there was one short, plaintive groan, and the body of the young pirate fell into the hole. Instantly all the other goods, furs, rugs, or whatever they were, were tumbled in upon him.

Then the men began to shovel in the earth and sand, and in an incredibly short time the hole was filled up even with the ground about it.

Of course all the earth and sand which had been taken out of the hole could not now be put back into it. But these experienced treasure-hiders knew exactly what to do with it. A spadeful at a time, the soil which could not be replaced was carried to the sea, and thrown out into the water, and when the whole place had been carefully smoothed over, the pirates gathered sticks and stones, and little bushes, and great masses of wild cranberry vines and scattered them about over the place so that it soon looked exactly like the rest of the beach about it.

Then the tall captain gave another low command, the pirates returned to their boat, it was pushed off, and rapidly rowed back to the schooner. Up came the anchor, up went the dark sails. The low, black schooner was put about, and very soon she was disappearing over the darkening waters, her black flag fluttering fiercely high above her.

"Now, let us run," whispered poor Mary, who, although she had not seen everything, imagined a

great deal; for as the pirates were getting into their boat she had opened her eyes and had counted them, and there were only nine besides the tall captain.

Abner thought that her advice was very good, and starting up out of the brushwood they hastened home as fast as their legs would carry them.

The next day Abner seemed to be a changed man. He had work to do, but he neglected it. Never had such a thing happened before! For hours he sat in front of the house, looking up into the sky, counting one, two, three, four, five, six, seven. Then he would twist himself around on the little bench, and count seven more.

This worthy couple lived in a small house which had a large cellar, and during the afternoon of that day Abner busied himself in clearing out this cellar, and taking out of it everything which it had contained. His wife asked no questions. In her soul she knew what Abner was thinking about.

Supper was over, and most of the people in the village were thinking of going to bed, when Abner said to Mary: "Let us each take a spade, and I

will carry a pail, and we will go out upon the beach for a walk. If any one should see us, they would think that we were going to dig for clams."

"Oh, no, dear Abner!" cried Mary. "We must not dig there! Think of that young pirate. Almost the first thing we would come to would be him!"

"I have thought of that," said Abner; "but do you not believe that the most Christian act that you and I could do would be to take him out and place him in a proper grave near by?"

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Mary, "do not say such a thing as that! Think of his ghost! They killed him and put him there, that his ghost might guard their treasure. You know, Abner, as well as I do, that this is their dreadful fashion!"

"I know all about that," said Abner, "and that is the reason I wish to go to-night. I do not believe there has yet been time enough for his ghost to form. But let us take him out now, dear Mary, and lay him reverently away, — and then!" He looked at her with flashing eyes.

"But, Abner," said she, "do you think we have the right?"



“Of course we have,” said he. “Those treasures do not belong to the pirates. If we take them, they are treasure-trove, and legally ours. And think, dear Mary, how poor we are to-night and how rich we may be to-morrow! Come, get the pail. We must be off.”

Running nearly all the way, — for they were in such a hurry they could not walk, — Abner and Mary soon reached the bluff, and hastily scrambling down to the beach below, they stood upon the dreadful spot where Captain Kidd and his pirates had stood the night before. There was the old battered pine tree, reaching out two of its bare arms encouragingly toward them.

Without loss of time Abner walked up to the tree, put his back to it, and then looked up into the sky. Now he called Mary to him. “Which star do you think he looked at, good wife?” said he. “There is a bright one low down, and then there is another one a little higher up, and farther to the right, but it is fainter.”

“It would be the bright one, I think,” said Mary. And then Abner, his eyes fixed upon the bright star, commenced to stride. One, two, three,



four, five, six, seven. Turning squarely around to the left he again made seven paces. And now he beckoned vigorously to Mary to come and dig.

For about ten minutes they dug, and then they laid bare a great mass of rock. "This isn't the place," cried Abner. "I must begin again. I did not look at the right star. I will take the other one."

For the greater part of that night Abner and Mary remained upon the beach. Abner would put his back against the tree, fix his eyes upon another star, stride forward seven paces, and then seven to the left, and he would come upon a little scrubby pine tree. Of course that was not the place.

The moon soon began to set, and more stars came out, so that Abner had a greater choice. Again and again he made his measurements, and every time that he came to the end of his second seven paces, he found that it would have been impossible for the pirates to make their excavation there.

There was clearly something wrong. Abner thought that he had not selected the right star, and

Mary thought that his legs were not long enough. "That pirate captain," quoth she, "had a long and manly stride. Seven of his paces would go a far greater distance than seven of yours, Abner."

Abner made his paces a little longer; but although he and his wife kept up their work until they could see the early dawn, they found no spot where it would be worth while to dig, and so mournfully they returned to their home and their empty cellar.

As long as the moonlight lasted, Abner and Mary went to the little beach at the head of the bay, and made their measurements and their searches, but although they sometimes dug a little here and there, they always found that they had not struck the place where the pirate's treasure had been buried.

When at last they gave up their search, and concluded to put their household goods back into their cellar, they told the tale to some of the neighbors, and other people went out and dug, not only at the place which had been designated, but miles up and down the coast, and then the story was told and retold, and so it has lasted until the present day.

What has been said about the legendary Captain Kidd will give a very good idea of the estimation in which this romantic being has been, and still is, held in various parts of the country, and, of all the legitimate legends about him, there is not one which recounts his piratical deeds upon our coast. The reason for this will be seen when we consider, in the next chapter, the life and character of the real Captain Kidd.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE REAL CAPTAIN KIDD

**W**ILLIAM KIDD, or Robert Kidd, as he is sometimes called, was a sailor in the merchant service who had a wife and family in New York. He was a very respectable man and had a good reputation as a seaman, and about 1690, when there was war between England and France, Kidd was given the command of a privateer, and having had two or three engagements with French vessels he showed himself to be a brave fighter and a prudent commander.

Some years later he sailed to England, and, while there, he received an appointment of a peculiar character. It was at the time when the King of England was doing his best to put down the pirates of the American coast, and Sir George Bellomont, the recently appointed Governor of New York, recommended Captain Kidd as a very suitable man to command a ship to be sent out to suppress

piracy. When Kidd agreed to take the position of chief of marine police, he was not employed by the Crown, but by a small company of gentlemen of capital, who formed themselves into a sort of trust company, or society for the prevention of cruelty to merchantmen, and the object of their association was not only to put down pirates, but to put some money in their own pockets as well.

Kidd was furnished with two commissions, one appointing him a privateer with authority to capture French vessels, and the other empowering him to seize and destroy all pirate ships. Kidd was ordered in his mission to keep a strict account of all booty captured, in order that it might be fairly divided among those who were stockholders in the enterprise, one-tenth of the total proceeds being reserved for the King.

Kidd sailed from England in the *Adventure*, a large ship with thirty guns and eighty men, and on his way to America he captured a French ship which he carried to New York. Here he arranged to make his crew a great deal larger than had been thought necessary in England, and, by offering a fair share of the property he might confiscate on

piratical or French ships, he induced a great many able seamen to enter his service, and when the *Adventure* left New York, she carried a crew of one hundred and fifty-five men.

With a fine ship and a strong crew, Kidd now sailed out of the harbor with the ostensible<sup>1</sup> purpose of putting down piracy in American waters, but the methods of this legally appointed marine policeman were very peculiar, and, instead of cruising up and down our coast, he gayly sailed away to the island of Madiera,<sup>2</sup> and then around the Cape of Good Hope to Madagascar and the Red Sea, thus getting himself as far out of his regular beat as any New York constable would have been had he undertaken to patrol the dominions of the Khan of Tartary.

By the time Captain Kidd reached that part of the world he had been at sea for nearly a year without putting down any pirates or capturing any French ships. In fact, he had made no money whatever for himself or the stockholders of the company which had sent him out. His men, of course, must have been much surprised at this

<sup>1</sup> Ostensible, apparent.

<sup>2</sup> Madiera. See map.

unusual neglect of his own and his employers' interests, but when he reached the Red Sea, he boldly informed them that he had made a change in his business, and had decided that he would be no longer a suppressor of piracy, but would become a pirate himself; and, instead of taking prizes of French ships only, — which he was legally empowered to do, — he would try to capture any valuable ship he could find on the seas, no matter to what nation it belonged. He then went on to state that his present purpose in coming into those oriental waters was to capture the rich fleet from Mocha which was due in the lower part of the Red Sea about that time.

The crew of the *Adventure*, who must have been tired of having very little to do and making no money, expressed their entire approbation of their captain's change of purpose, and readily agreed to become pirates.

Kidd waited a good while for the Mocha fleet, but it did not arrive, and then he made his first venture in actual piracy. He overhauled a Moorish vessel which was commanded by an English captain, and as England was not at war



with Morocco, and as the nationality of the ship's commander should have protected him, Kidd thus boldly broke the marine laws which governed the civilized world and stamped himself an out-and-out pirate. After the exercise of considerable cruelty he extorted from his first prize a small amount of money; and although he and his men did not gain very much booty, they had whetted their appetites for more, and Kidd cruised savagely over the eastern seas in search of other spoils.

After a time the *Adventure* fell in with a fine English ship, called the *Royal Captain*, and although she was probably laden with a rich cargo, Kidd did not attack her. His piratical character was not yet sufficiently formed to give him the disloyal audacity which would enable him with his English ship and his English crew, to fall upon another English ship manned by another English crew. In time his heart might be hardened, but he felt that he could not begin with this sort of thing just yet. So the *Adventure* saluted the *Royal Captain* with ceremonious politeness, and each vessel passed quietly on its way. But this conscientious consideration did

not suit Kidd's crew. They had already had a taste of booty, and they were hungry for more, and when the fine English vessel, of which they might so easily have made a prize, was allowed to escape them, they were loud in their complaints and grumblings.

One of the men, a gunner, named William Moore, became actually impertinent upon the subject, and he and Captain Kidd had a violent quarrel, in the course of which the captain picked up a heavy iron-bound bucket and struck the dissatisfied gunner on the head with it. The blow was such a powerful one that the man's skull was broken, and he died the next day.

Captain Kidd's conscience seems to have been a good deal in his way; for although he had been sailing about in various eastern waters, taking prizes wherever he could, he was anxious that reports of his misdeeds should not get home before him. Having captured a fine vessel bound westward, he took from her all the booty he could, and then proceeded to arrange matters so that the capture of this ship should appear to be a legal transaction. The ship was manned by Moors and

commanded by a Dutchman, and of course Kidd had no right to touch it, but the sharp-witted and business-like pirate selected one of the passengers and made him sign a paper declaring that he was a Frenchman, and that he commanded the ship. When this statement had been sworn to before witnesses, Kidd put the document in his pocket so that if he were called upon to explain the transaction, he might be able to show that he had good reason to suppose that he had captured a French ship, which, of course, was all right and proper.

Kidd now ravaged the East India waters with great success and profit, and at last he fell in with a very fine ship from Armenia, called the *Quedagh Merchant*, commanded by an Englishman. Kidd's conscience had been growing harder and harder every day, and he did not now hesitate to attack any vessel. The great merchantman was captured, and proved to be one of the most valuable prizes ever taken by a pirate, for Kidd's own share of the spoils amounted to more than sixty thousand dollars. This was such a grand haul that Kidd lost no time in taking his prize to some place where he might safely dispose of



"THE GREAT MERCHANTMAN WAS CAPTURED."

her cargo, and get rid of her passengers. Accordingly he sailed for Madagascar. While he was there he fell in with the first pirate vessel he had met since he had started out to put down piracy. This was a ship commanded by an English pirate named Culliford, and here would have been a chance for Captain Kidd to show that, although he might transgress the law himself, he would be true to his engagement not to allow other people to do so ; but he had given up putting down piracy, and instead of apprehending Culliford he went into partnership with him, and the two agreed to go pirating together.

This partnership, however, did not continue long, for Captain Kidd began to believe that it was time for him to return to his native country and make a report of his proceedings to his employers. Having confined his piratical proceedings to distant parts of the world, he hoped that he would be able to make Sir George Bellomont and the other stockholders suppose that his booty was all legitimately taken from French vessels cruising in the east, and when the proper division should be made he would be able to

quietly enjoy his portion of the treasure he had gained.

He did not go back in the *Adventure*, which was probably not large enough to carry all the booty he had amassed,<sup>1</sup> but putting everything on board his latest prize, the *Quedagh Merchant*, he burned his old ship and sailed homeward.

When he reached the West Indies, however, our wary sea-robber was very much surprised to find that accounts of his evil deeds had reached America, and that the colonial authorities had been so much incensed by the news that the man who had been sent out to suppress piracy had become himself a pirate, that they had circulated notices throughout the different colonies, urging the arrest of Kidd if he should come into any American port. This was disheartening intelligence for the treasure-laden Captain Kidd, but he did not despair; he knew that the love of money was often strong in the minds of human beings as the love of justice. Sir George Bello-mont, who was now in New York, was one of the principal stockholders in the enterprise, and

<sup>1</sup> Amassed, gathered together.



Kidd hoped that the rich share of the results of his industry which would come to the Governor might cause unpleasant reports to be disregarded. In this case he might yet return to his wife and family with a neat little fortune, and without danger of being called upon to explain his exceptional performances in the eastern seas.

Of course Kidd was not so foolish and rash as to sail into New York harbor on board the *Quedagh Merchant*, so he bought a small sloop and put the most valuable portion of his goods on board her, leaving his larger vessel, which also contained a great quantity of merchandise, in the charge of one of his confederates, while in the little sloop he cautiously approached the coast of New Jersey. His great desire was to find out what sort of a reception he might expect, so he entered Delaware Bay. When he stopped at a little seaport in order to take in some supplies, he discovered that there was but small chance of his visiting his home and his family, and of making a report to his superior in the character of a deserving mariner who had returned after a successful voyage. Some people in the village recognized him, and the



report soon spread to New York that the pirate Kidd was lurking about the coast. A sloop of war was sent out to capture his vessel, and finding that it was impossible to remain in the vicinity where he had been discovered, Kidd sailed northward and entered Long Island Sound.

Here the shrewd and anxious pirate began to act the part of the watch dog who has been killing sheep. In every way he endeavored to assume the appearance of innocence and to conceal every sign of misbehavior. He wrote to Sir George Bellomont that he should have called upon him in order to report his proceedings and hand over his profits, were it not for the wicked and malicious reports that had been circulated about him.

It was during this period of suspense, when the returned pirate did not know what was likely to happen, that it is supposed, by the believers in the hidden treasures of Kidd, that he buried his coin and bullion and his jewels, some in one place and some in another, so that if he were captured his riches would not be taken with him. Among the wild stories which were believed at that time, and for long years after, was one to the effect that Cap-

tain Kidd's ship was chased up the Hudson River by a man-of-war, and that the pirates, finding they could not get away, sank their ship and fled to the shore with all the gold and silver they could carry, which they afterwards buried at the foot of Dunderbergh Mountain. A great deal of rocky soil has been turned over at different times in search of these treasures, but no discoveries of hidden coin have yet been reported. The fact is, however, that during this time of anxious waiting Kidd never sailed west of Oyster Bay in Long Island. He was afraid to approach New York, although he had frequent communication with that city, and was joined by his wife and family.

About this time occurred an incident which has given rise to all the stories regarding the buried treasure of Captain Kidd. The disturbed and anxious pirate concluded that it was a dangerous thing to keep so much valuable treasure on board his vessel which might at any time be overhauled by the authorities, and he therefore landed at Gardiner's Island on the Long Island coast, and obtained permission from the proprietor to bury some of his superfluous stores upon his



PIRATES DIVIDING THE SPOIL

estate. This was a straightforward transaction. Mr. Gardiner knew all about the burial of the treasure, and when it was afterwards proved that Kidd was really a pirate, the hidden booty was all given up to the government.

This appears to be the only case in which it was positively known that Kidd buried treasure on our coast, and it has given rise to all the stories of the kind which have ever been told.

For some weeks Kidd's sloop remained in Long Island Sound, and then he took courage and went to Boston to see some influential people there. He was allowed to go freely about the city for a week, and then he was arrested.

The rest of Kidd's story is soon told; he was sent to England for trial, and there he was condemned to death, not only for the piracies he had committed, but also for the murder of William Moore. He was executed, and his body was hung in chains on the banks of the Thames, where for years it dangled in the wind, a warning to all evil-minded sailors.

About the time of Kidd's trial and execution a ballad was written which had a wide circulation

in England and America. It was set to music, and for many years helped to spread the fame of this pirate. The ballad was a very long one, containing nearly twenty-six verses, and some of them run as follows:—

My name was Robert Kidd, when I sailed, when I  
sailed,

My name was Robert Kidd, when I sailed,

My name was Robert Kidd,

God's laws I did forbid,

And so wickedly I did, when I sailed.

I spyed the ships from France, as I sailed, as I sailed,

I spyed the ships from France, as I sailed,

I spyed the ships from France,

To them I did advance,

And took them all by chance, as I sailed.

I spyed the ships of Spain, as I sailed, as I sailed,

I spyed the ships of Spain, as I sailed,

I spyed the ships of Spain,

I fired on them amain,

'Till most of them was slain, as I sailed.

I'd ninety bars of gold, as I sailed, as I sailed,

I'd ninety bars of gold, as I sailed,

I'd ninety bars of gold,

And dollars manifold,

With riches uncontrolled, as I sailed.

It is said that Kidd showed no repentance when he was tried, but insisted that he was the victim of malicious persons who swore falsely against him. And yet a more thoroughly dishonest rascal never sailed under the black flag. In the guise of an accredited officer of the government, he committed the crimes he was sent out to suppress ; he deceived his men ; he robbed and misused his fellow-countrymen and his friends, and he even descended to the meanness of cheating and despoiling the natives of the West India Islands, with whom he traded. These people were in the habit of supplying pirates with food and other necessities, and they always found their rough customers entirely honest, and willing to pay for what they received ; for as the pirates made a practice of stopping at certain points for supplies, they wished, of course, to be on good terms with those who furnished them. But Kidd had no ideas of honor toward people of high or low degree. He would trade with the natives as if he intended to treat them fairly and pay for all he got ; but when the time came for him to depart, and he was ready to weigh anchor, he would seize upon all the commodities he could lay his hands



upon, and without paying a copper to the distressed and indignant Indians, he would gayly sail away, his black flag flaunting <sup>1</sup> derisively <sup>2</sup> in the wind.

But although in reality Captain Kidd was no hero, he has been known for a century and more as the great American pirate, and his name has been representative of piracy ever since. Years after he had been hung, when people heard that a vessel with a black flag, or one which looked black in the distance, flying from its rigging had been seen, they forgot that the famous pirate was dead, and imagined that Captain Kidd was visiting their part of the coast in order that he might find a good place to bury some treasure which it was no longer safe for him to carry about.

There were two great reasons for the fame of Captain Kidd. One of these was the fact that he had been sent out by important officers of the crown who expected to share the profits of his legitimate operations, but who were supposed by their enemies to be perfectly willing to take any sort of profits provided it could not be proved that they were the results of piracy, and who afterwards

<sup>1</sup> Flaunting, waving.      <sup>2</sup> Derisively, making sport, ridiculing.



allowed Kidd to suffer for their sins as well as his own. These opinions introduced certain political features into his career and made him a very much talked-of man. The greater reason for his fame, however, was the widespread belief in his buried treasures, and this made him the object of the most intense interest to hundreds of misguided people who hoped to be lucky enough to share his spoils.

There were other pirates on the American coast during the eighteenth century, and some of them became very well known, but their stories are not uncommon, and we need not tell them here. As our country became better settled, and as well-armed revenue cutters began to cruise up and down our Atlantic coast for the protection of our commerce, pirates became fewer and fewer, and even those who were still bold enough to ply their trade grew milder in their manners, less daring in their exploits, and — more important than anything else — so unsuccessful in their illegal enterprises that they were forced to admit that it was now more profitable to command or work a merchantman than endeavor to capture one, and so the sea-robbers of our coasts gradually passed away.































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